

Greg V f

THE
WORKS
OF
OSSIAN,
THE
SON of FINGAL,



THE
WORKS
OF
OSSIAN,
THE
SON of FINGAL,

Translated from the GALIC LANGUAGE

By JAMES MACPHERSON.

VOL. III.

Fortia facta patrum. VIRG.

P A R I S:

Printed by J. FR. VALADE:

And sold by Theophilus BARROIS, Bookseller,
Quai des Augustins.

M. DCC. LXXXIII.

THE
WORKS
OF

OSIAN.



BY JAMES MACPHERSON.

Vol. III.

PART
THIRD

As sold by the Trustees of the British Museum, London.

MDCCXXXIII.

DISSERTATION.

THE history of those nations which originally possessed the north of Europe, is little known. Destitute of the use of letters, they themselves had not the means of transmitting their great actions to remote posterity. Foreign writers saw them only at a distance, and therefore their accounts are partial and undistinct. The vanity of the Romans induced them to consider the nations beyond the pale of their empire as barbarians; and consequently their history unworthy of being investigated. Some men, otherwise of great merit among ourselves, give into this confined opinion. Having early imbibed their idea of exalted manners from the Greek and Roman writers, they scarcely ever afterwards have the fortitude to allow any dignity of character to any other ancient people.

Without derogating from the fame of Greece and Rome, we may consider antiquity beyond the pale of their empire worthy of some attention. The nobler passions of the mind never shoot forth more free and unrestrained than in these times we call bar-

vj A DISSERTATION.

barous. That irregular manner of life, and those manly pursuits from which barbarity takes its name, are highly favorable to a strength of mind unknown in polished times. In advanced society the characters of men are more uniform and disguised. The human passions lie in some degree concealed behind forms, and artificial manners; and the powers of the soul, without an opportunity of exerting them, lose their vigour. The times of regular government, and polished manners, are therefore to be wished for by the feeble and weak in mind. An unsettled state, and those convulsions which attend it, is the proper field for an exalted character, and the exertion of great parts. Merit there rises always superior; no fortuitous event can raise the timid and mean into power. To those who look upon antiquity in this light, it is an agreeable prospect; and they alone can have real pleasure in tracing nations to their source.

The establishment of the Celtic states, in the north of Europe, is beyond the reach of their written annals. The traditions and songs to which they trusted their history, were lost, or altogether corrupted in their revolutions and migrations, which were so frequent and universal, that no kingdom in Europe is now possessed by its original inhabitants. Societies were formed, and king-

A DISSERTATION. vij

doms erected, from a mixture of nations, who, in process of time, lost all knowledge of their own origin.

If tradition could be depended upon, it is only among a people, from all time, free of intermixture with foreigners. We are to look for these among the mountains and inaccessible parts of a country: places, on account of their barrenness, uninviting to an enemy, or whose natural strength enabled the natives to repel invasions. Such are the inhabitants of the mountains of Scotland. We, accordingly, find, that they differ materially from those who possess the low and more fertile part of the kingdom. Their language is pure and original, and their manners are those of an antient and unmixed race of men. Conscious of their own antiquity, they long despised others, as a new and mixed people. As they lived in a country only fit for pasture, they were free of that toil and business, which engross the attention of a commercial people. Their amusement consisted in hearing or repeating their songs and traditions, and these intirely turned on the antiquity of their nation, and the exploits of their forefathers. It is no wonder, therefore, that there are more remains of antiquity among them, than among any other people in Europe. Traditions, however, concerning remote periods, are only to be regarded, in

viii A DISSERTATION.

so far as they co-incide with cotemporary writers of undoubted credit and veracity.

No writers began their accounts from a more early period, than the historians of the Scots nation. Without records, or even tradition itself, they give a long list of antient kings, and a detail of their transactions, with a scrupulous exactness. One might naturally suppose, that, when they had no authentic annals, they should, at least, have recourse to the traditions of their country, and have reduced them into a regular system of history. Of both they seem to have been equally destitute. Born in the low country, and strangers to the antient language of their nation, they contented themselves with copying from one another, and retailing the same fictions, in a new colour and dress.

John Fordun was the first who collected those fragments of the Scots history, which had escaped the brutal policy of Edward I. and reduced them into order. His accounts, in so far as they concerned recent transactions, deserved credit: beyond a certain period, they were fabulous and unsatisfactory. Some time before Fordun wrote, the king of England, in a letter to the pope, had run up the antiquity of his nation to a very

A DISSERTATION. ix

remote æra. Fordun, possessed of all the national prejudice of the age, was unwilling that his country should yield, in point of antiquity, to a people, then its rivals and enemies. Destitute of annals in Scotland, he had recourse to Ireland, which, according to the vulgar errors of the times, was reckoned the first habitation of the Scots. He found, there, that the Irish bards had carried their pretensions to antiquity as high, if not beyond any nation in Europe. It was from them he took those improbable fictions, which form the first part of his history.

The writers that succeeded Fordun implicitly followed his system, though they sometimes varied from him in their relations of particular transactions, and the order of succession of their kings. As they had no new lights, and were, equally with him, unacquainted with the traditions of their country, their histories contain little information concerning the origin of the Scots. Even Buchanan himself, except the elegance and vigour of his stile, has very little to recommend him. Blinded with political prejudices, he seemed more anxious to turn the fictions of his predecessors to his own purposes, than to detect their misrepresentations, or investigate truth amidst the darkness which they had thrown round it. It therefore appears, that little can be collected from their own

A DISSERTATION.

historians, concerning the first migration of the Scots into Britain.

That this island was peopled from Gaul admits of no doubt. Whether colonies came afterwards from the north of Europe is a matter of meer speculation. When South-Britain yielded to the power of the Romans, the unconquered nations to the north of the province were distinguished by the name of *Caledonians*. From their very name, it appears, that they were of those *Gauls*, who possessed themselves originally of Britain. It is compounded of two *Celtic* words, *Caël* signifying *Celts*, or *Gauls*, and *Dun* or *Don*, a hill; so that *Caël-don*, or *Caledonians*, is as much as to say, the *Celts of the hill country*. The Highlanders, to this day, call themselves *Caël*, their language *Caëlic*, or *Galic*, and their country *Caëldoch*, which the Romans softened into *Caledonia*. This, of itself, is sufficient to demonstrate, that they are the genuine descendents of the antient *Caledonians*, and not a pretended colony of *Scots*, who settled first in the north, in the third or fourth century.

From the double meaning of the word *Caël*, which signifies *strangers*, as well as *Gauls*, or *Celts*, some have imagined, that the ancestors of the *Caledonians* were of a different race from the rest of the Britons,

A DISSERTATION. xj

and that they received their name upon that account. This opinion, say they, is supported by Tacitus, who, from several circumstances, concludes, that the Caledonians were of German extraction. A discussion of a point so intricate, at this distance of time, could neither be satisfactory nor important.

Towards the latter end of the third, and beginning of the fourth century, we meet with the *Scots* in the north (1). Porphyrius makes the first mention of them about that time. As the *Scots* were not heard of before that period, most writers supposed them to have been a colony, newly come to Britain, and that the *Picts* were the only genuine descendents of the antient Caledonians. This mistake is easily removed. The Caledonians, in process of time, became naturally divided into two distinct nations, as possessing parts of the country, intirely different in their nature and soil. The western coast of Scotland is hilly and barren; towards the east the country is plain, and fit for tillage. The inhabitants of the mountains, a roving and uncontrouled race of men, lived by feeding of cattle, and what they killed in hunting. Their employment did not fix them to one place. They removed from one heath to

(1) St. Hieron. ad Cresiphon.

xij A DISSERTATION.

another, as suited best with their convenience or inclination. They were not, therefore, improperly called, by their neighbours, *SCUTE*, or *the wandering nation*; which is evidently the origin of the Roman name of *Scoti*.

On the other hand, the Caledonians, who possessed the east coast of Scotland, as the division of the country was plain and fertile, applied themselves to agriculture, and raising of corn. It was from this, that the Galic name of the *Picts* proceeded; for they are called, in that language, *Cruithnich* i. e. *the wheat or corn-eaters*. As the Picts lived in a country so different in its nature from that possessed by the Scots, so their national character suffered a material change. Unobstructed by mountains, or lakes, their communication with one another was free and frequent. Society, therefore, became sooner established among them, than among the Scots, and, consequently, they were much sooner governed by civil magistrates and laws. This, at last, produced so great a difference in the manners of the two nations, that they began to forget their common origin, and almost continual quarrels and animosities subsisted between them. These animosities, after some ages, ended in the subversion of the Pictish kingdom, but not in the total extirpation of the nation, ac-

A DISSERTATION, xliij

According to most of the Scots writers, who seemed to think it more for the honour of their countrymen to annihilate, than reduce a rival people under their obedience. It is certain, however, that the very name of the Picts was lost, and those that remained were so compleatly incorporated with their conquerors, that they soon lost all memory of their own origin.—

The end of the Pictish government is placed so near that period, to which authentic annals reach, that it is matter of wonder, that we have no monuments of their language or history remaining. This favours the system I have laid down. Had they originally been of a different race from the Scots, their language of course would be different. The contrary is the case. The names of places in the Pictish dominions, and the very names of their kings, which are handed down to us, are of Galic original, which is a convincing proof, that the two nations were, of old, one and the same, and only divided into two governments, by the effect which their situation had upon the genius of the people.

The name of *Picts* was, perhaps, given by the Romans to the Caledonians, who possessed the east coast of Scotland, from their painting their bodies. This circumstance

xiv A DISSERTATION.

made some imagine, that the Picts were of British extract, and a different race of men from the Scots. That more of the Britons, who fled northward from the tyranny of the Romans, settled in the low country of Scotland, than among the Scots of the mountains, may be easily imagined, from the very nature of the country. It was they who introduced painting among the Picts. From this circumstance proceeded the name of the latter, to distinguish them from the Scots, who never had that art among them, and from the Britons, who discontinued it after the Roman conquest.

The Caledonians, most certainly, acquired a considerable knowledge in navigation, by their living on a coast intersected with many arms of the sea, and, in islands, divided, one from another, by wide and dangerous firths. It is, therefore, highly probable, that they, very early, found their way to the north of Ireland, which is within sight of their own country. That Ireland was first peopled from Britain is certain. The vicinity of the two islands; the exact correspondence of the antient inhabitants of both, in point of manners and language, are sufficient proofs, even if we had not the testimony of authors (1) of undoubt-

(1) Dio. Sic. l. 5.

A DISSERTATION, xv

ed veracity to confirm it. The abettors of the most romantic systems of Irish antiquities allow it; but they place the colony from Britain in an improbable and remote æra. I shall easily admit, that the colony of the *Firbolg*, confessedly the *Belga* of Britain, settled in the south of Ireland, before the *Caël*, or Caledonians, discovered the north: but it is not at all likely, that the migration of the *Firbolg* to Ireland happened many centuries before the Christian æra.

Ossian, in the poem of *Temora* (1); throws considerable light on this subject. His accounts agree so well with what the ancients have delivered, concerning the first population and inhabitants of Ireland, that every unbiassed person will confess them more probable, than the legends handed down, by tradition, in that country. From him, it appears, that in the days of *Trathal*, grandfather to *Fingal*, Ireland was possessed by two nations; the *Firbolg* or *Belga* of Britain, who inhabited the south, and the *Caël*, who passed over from Caledonia and the Hebrides to Ulster. The two nations, as is usual among an unpolished and lately settled people, were divided into small dynasties, subject to petty kings, or chiefs,

(1) *Temora*, Book II.

xvi A DISSERTATION.

independent of one another. In this situation, it is probable, they continued long, without any material revolution in the state of the island, until Crothar, Lord of Atha, a country in Connaught, the most potent chief of the *Firbolg*, carried away Conlama, the daughter of Cathmin, a chief of the *Caël*, who possessed Ulster.

Conlama had been betrothed, some time before, to Turloch, a chief of their own nation. Turloch resented the affront offered him by Crothar, made an irruption into Connaught, and killed Cormul, the brother of Crothar, who came to oppose his progress. Crothar himself then took arms, and either killed or expelled Turloch. The war, upon this, became general, between the two nations: and the *Caël* were reduced to the last extremity.—In this situation, they applied, for aid, to Trathal king of Morven, who sent his brother Conar, already famous for his great exploits, to their relief. Conar, upon his arrival in Ulster, was chosen king, by the unanimous consent of the Caledonian tribes, who possessed that country. The war was renewed with vigour and success; but the *Firbolg* appear to have been rather repelled than subdued. In succeeding reigns, we learn from episodes in the same poem, that the chiefs of Atha made several efforts to become monarchs

A DISSERTATION. xvij

of Ireland, and to expel the race of Conar.

To Conar succeeded his son Cormac (1), who appears to have reigned long. In his latter days he seems to have been driven to the last extremity, by an insurrection of the *Firbolg*, who supported the pretensions of the chiefs of Atha to the Irish throne. Fingal, who then was very young, came to the aid of Cormac, totally defeated Colculla chief of Atha, and re-established Cormac (2) in the sole possession of all Ireland. It was then he fell in love with, and took to wife, Ros-crana, the daughter of Cormac, who was the mother of Ossian.

Cormac was succeeded in the Irish throne by his son, Cairbre; Cairbre by Artho, his son, who was the father of that Cormac, in whose minority the invasion of Swaran happened, which is the subject of the poem of *Fingal*. The family of Atha, who had not relinquished their pretensions to the Irish throne, rebelled in the minority of Cormac, defeated his adherents, and murdered him in the palace of Temora. Cairbar (3), lord of Atha, upon this, mounted

(1) Book III.

(2) Book IV.

(3) Book I.

xxviii A DISSERTATION.

the throne. His usurpation soon ended with his life; for Fingal made an expedition into Ireland, and restored, after various vicissitudes of fortune, the family of Conar to the possession of the kingdom. This war is the subject of *Temora*; the events, though certainly heightened and embellished by poetry, seem, notwithstanding, to have their foundation in true history.

Ossian has not only preserved the history of the first migration of the Caledonians into Ireland, he has also delivered some important facts, concerning the first settlement of the *Firbolg*, or *Belga of Britain*, in that kingdom, under their leader Larthon, who was ancestor to Cairbar and Cathmor, who successively mounted the Irish throne, after the death of Cormac, the son of Artho. I forbear to transcribe the passage, on account of its length. It is the song of Fonar, the bard; towards the latter end of the seventh book of *Temora* (1). As the generations from Larthon to Cathmor, to whom the episode is addressed, are not marked, as are those of the family of Conar, the first king of Ireland, we can form no judgment of the time of the settlement of the *Firbolg*. It is, however, probable, it was some time before the *Caël*, or Caledonians, settled in Ulster.

(1) Book VII.

A DISSERTATION. xix

—One important fact may be gathered from this history of Ossian, that the Irish had no king before the latter end of the first century, Fingal lived, it is certain, in the third century; so Conar, the first monarch of the Irish, who was his grand-uncle, cannot be placed farther back than the close of the first. The establishing of this fact lays, at once, aside the pretended antiquities of the Scots and Irish, and cuts off the long list of kings which the latter give us for a millennium before.

Of the affairs of Scotland, it is certain, nothing can be depended upon, prior to the reign of Fergus, the son of Erc, who lived in the fifth century. The true history of Ireland begins somewhat later than that period. Sir James Ware (1), who was indefatigable in his researches after the antiquities of his country, rejects, as mere fiction and idle romance, all that is related of the antient Irish, before the time of St. Patrick, and the reign of Leogaire. It is from this consideration, that he begins his history at the introduction of christianity, remarking, that all that is delivered down, concerning the times of paganism, were tales of late invention, strangely mixed with anachronisms and inconsistencies. Such being the opinion

(1) War. de antiq. Hybern. præ. p. 1.

XX A DISSERTATION.

of Ware, who had collected with uncommon industry and zeal, all the real and pretendedly antient manuscripts, concerning the history of his country, we may, on his authority, reject the improbable and self-condemned tales of Keating and O'Flaherty. Credulous and puerile to the last degree, they have disgraced the antiquities they meant to establish. It is to be wished, that some able Irishman, who understands the language and records of his country, may redeem, ere it is too late, the genuine antiquities of Ireland, from the hands of these idle fabulists.

By comparing the history preserved by Ossian with the legends of the Scots and Irish writers, and, by afterwards examining both by the test of the Roman authors, it is easy to discover which is the most probable. Probability is all that can be established on the authority of tradition, ever dubious and uncertain. But when it favours the hypothesis laid down by cotemporary writers of undoubted veracity, and, as it were, finishes the figure of which they only drew the outlines, it ought, in the judgment of sober reason, to be preferred to accounts framed in dark and distant periods, with little judgment, and upon no authority.

Concerning the period of more than a

A DISSERTATION. xxj

century, which intervenes between Fingal and the reign of Fergus, the son of Erc or Arcath, tradition is dark and contradictory. Some trace up the family of Fergus to a son of Fingal of that name, who makes a considerable figure in Ossian's poems. The three elder sons of Fingal, Ossian, Fillan, and Ryno, dying without issue, the succession, of course, devolved upon Fergus, the fourth son, and his posterity. This Fergus, say some traditions, was the father of Congal, whose son was Arcath, the father of Fergus, properly called the first king of Scots, as it was in his time the *Caël*, who possessed the western coast of Scotland, began to be distinguished, by foreigners, by the name of Scots. From thence forward, the Scots and Picts, as distinct nations, became objects of attention to the historians of other countries. The internal state of the two Caledonian kingdoms has always continued, and ever must remain, in obscurity and fable.

It is in this epoch we must fix the beginning of the decay of that species of heroism, which subsisted in the days of Ossian. There are three stages in human society. The first is the result of consanguinity, and the natural affection of the members of a family to one another. The second begins when property is established, and men enter into associations for mutual defence, against the invasions

xiij A DISSERTATION.

and injustice of neighbours. Mankind submit; in the third, to certain laws and subordinations of government, to which they trust the safety of their persons and property. As the first is formed on nature, so, of course, it is the most disinterested and noble. Men, in the last, have leisure to cultivate the mind, and to restore it, with reflection, to a primordial dignity of sentiment. The middle state is the region of compleat barbarism and ignorance. About the beginning of the fifth century, the Scots and Picts were advanced into the second stage, and, consequently, into those circumscribed sentiments, which always distinguish barbarity. — The events which soon after happened did not at all contribute to enlarge their ideas, or mend their national character.

About the year 426, the Romans, on account of domestic commotions, entirely forsook Britain, finding it impossible to defend so distant a frontier. The Picts and Scots, seizing this favorable opportunity, made incursions into the deserted province. The Britons, enervated by the slavery of several centuries, and those vices, which are inseparable from an advanced state of civility, were not able to withstand the impetuous, though irregular attacks of a barbarous enemy. In the utmost distress, they applied to their old masters, the Romans,

A DISSERTATION. xxiiij

and (after the unfortunate state of the Empire could not spare aid) to the Saxons , a nation equally barbarous and brave , with the enemies of whom they were so much afraid. Though the bravery of the Saxons repelled the Caledonian nations for a time , yet the latter found means to extend themselves , considerably , towards the South. It is , in this period , we must place the origin of the arts of civil life among the Scots. The seat of government was removed from the mountains to the plain and more fertile provinces of the South , to be near the common enemy , in case of sudden incursions. Instead of roving through unfrequented wilds , in search of subsistence , by means of hunting , men applied to agriculture , and raising of corn. This manner of life was the first means of changing the national character. — The next thing which contributed to it was their mixture with strangers.

In the countries which the Scots had conquered from the Britons , it is probable the most of the old inhabitants remained. These incorporating with the conquerors , taught them agriculture , and other arts , which they themselves had received from the Romans. The Scots , however , in number as well as power , being the most predominant , retained still their language , and as many of the customs of their ancestors , as suited with

the nature of the country they possessed. Even the union of the two Caledonian kingdoms did not much affect the national character. Being originally descended from the same stock, the manners of the Picts and Scots were as similar as the different natures of the countries they possessed permitted.

What brought about a total change in the genius of the Scots nation, was their wars, and other transactions with the Saxons. Several counties in the south of Scotland were alternately possessed by the two nations. They were ceded, in the ninth age, to the Scots, and, it is probable, that most of the Saxon inhabitants remained in possession of their lands. During the several conquests and revolutions in England, many fled, for refuge, into Scotland, to avoid the oppression of foreigners, or the tyranny of domestic usurpers; in so much, that the Saxon race formed perhaps near one half of the Scottish kingdom. The Saxon manners and language daily gained ground, on the tongue and customs of the antient Caledonians, till, at last, the latter were entirely relegated to the inhabitants of the mountains, who were still unmixed with strangers.

It was after the accession of territory which the Scots received, upon the retreat of the Romans from Britain, that the inhabitants
of

A DISSERTATION. XXV

of the Highlands were divided into clans. The king, when he kept his court in the mountains, was considered, by the whole nation, as the chief of their blood. Their small number, as well as the presence of their prince, prevented those divisions, which, afterwards, sprung forth into so many separate tribes. When the seat of government was removed to the south, those who remained in the Highlands were, of course, neglected. They naturally formed themselves into small societies, independent of one another. Each society had its own *regulus*, who either was, or in the succession of a few generations, was regarded as chief of their blood—The nature of the country favoured an institution of this sort. A few valleys, divided from one another by extensive heaths and impassible mountains, form the face of the Highlands. In these valleys the chiefs fixed their residence. Round them, and almost within sight of their dwellings, were the habitations of their relations and dependents.

The seats of the Highland chiefs were neither disagreeable nor inconvenient. Surrounded with mountains and hanging woods, they were covered from the inclemency of the weather. Near them generally ran a pretty large river, which, discharging itself not

xxvj A DISSERTATION.

far off, into an arm of the sea, or extensive lake, swarmed with variety of fish. The woods were stocked with wild-fowl; and the heaths and mountains behind them were the natural seat of the red deer and roe. If we make allowance for the backward state of agriculture, the valleys were not unfruitful; affording, if not all the conveniences, at least the necessaries of life. Here the chief lived, the supreme judge and law-giver of his own people; but his sway was neither severe nor unjust. As the populace regarded him as the chief of their blood, so he, in return, considered them as members of his family. His commands, therefore, though absolute and decisive, partook more of the authority of a father, than of the rigour of a judge. — Though the whole territory of the tribe was considered as the property of the chief, yet his vassals made him no other consideration for their lands than services, neither burdensome nor frequent. As he seldom went from home, he was at no expence. His table was supplied by his own herds, and what his numerous attendants killed in hunting.

In this rural kind of magnificence, the Highland chiefs lived, for many ages. At a distance from the seat of government, and secured, by the inaccessibility of their coun-

A DISSERTATION. xxvij

try, they were free and independent. As they had little communication with strangers, the customs of their ancestors remained among them, and their language retained its original purity. Naturally fond of military fame, and remarkably attached to the memory of their ancestors, they delighted in traditions and songs, concerning the exploits of their nation, and especially of their own particular families. A succession of bards was retained in every clan, to hand down the memorable actions of their forefathers. As the æra of Fingal, on account of Ossian's poems, was the most remarkable, and his chiefs the most renowned names in tradition, the bards took care to place one of them in the genealogy of every great family.—That part of the poems, which concerned the hero who was regarded as ancestor, was preserved, as an authentic record of the antiquity of the family, and was delivered down, from race to race, with wonderful exactness.

The bards themselves, in the mean time, were not idle. They erected their immediate patrons into heroes, and celebrated them in their songs. As the circle of their knowledge was narrow, their ideas were confined in proportion. A few happy expressions, and the manners they represent, may please those who understand the language;

xxviii] A DISSERTATION.

their obscurity and inaccuracy would disgust in a translation. — It was chiefly for this reason, that I kept wholly to the compositions of Ossian, in my former and present publication. As he acted on a more extensive sphere, his ideas are more noble and universal; neither has he so many of those peculiarities, which are only understood in a certain period or country. The other bards have their beauties, but not in that species of composition in which Ossian excels. Their rhimes, only calculated to kindle a martial spirit among the vulgar, afford very little pleasure to genuine taste. This observation only regards their poems of the heroic kind; in every other species of poetry they are more successful. They express the tender melancholy of desponding love, with irresistible simplicity and nature. So well adapted are the sounds of the words to the sentiments, that, even without any knowledge of the language, they pierce and dissolve the heart. Successful love is expressed with peculiar tenderness and elegance. In all their compositions, except the heroic, which was solely calculated to animate the vulgar, they give us the genuine language of the heart, without any of those affected ornaments of phraseology, which, though intended to beautify sentiments, divest them of their natural force. The ideas, it is confessed, are too local, to be ad-

A DISSERTATION. xxix

mired in another language ; to those who are acquainted with the manners they represent, and the scenes they describe , they must afford the highest pleasure and satisfaction.

It was the locality of his description and sentiment, that, probably , kept Ossian so long in the obscurity of an almost lost language. His ideas , though remarkably proper for the times in which he lived , are so contrary to the present advanced state of society, that more than a common mediocrity of taste is required, to relish his poems as they deserve.—Those who alone were capable to make a translation were , no doubt, conscious of this, and chose rather to admire their poet in secret, than see him received, with coldness, in an English dress.

These were long my own sentiments, and accordingly, my first translations, from the Galic, were merely accidental. The publication, which soon after followed, was so well received, that I was obliged to promise to my friends a larger collection. In a journey through the Highlands and isles, and , by the assistance of correspondents, since I left that country, all the genuine remains of the works of Ossian have come to my hands. In the preceding volume compleat poems were only given. Unfinished and imperfect poems were purposely omitted ; even some pieces

were rejected, on account of their length, and others, that they might not break in upon that thread of connection, which subsists in the lesser compositions, subjoined to *Fingal*. — That the comparative merit of pieces was not regarded, in the selection, will readily appear to those who shall read, attentively, the present collection. — It is animated with the same spirit of poetry; and the same strength of sentiment is sustained throughout.

The opening of the poem of *Temora* made its appearance in the first collection of Ossian's works. The second book, and several other episodes, have only fallen into my hands lately. The story of the poem, with which I had been long acquainted, enabled me to reduce the broken members of the piece into the order in which they now appear. For the ease of the reader, I have divided it myself into books, as I had done before with the poem of *Fingal*. As to the merit of the poem I shall not anticipate the judgment of the public. My impartiality might be suspected, in my accounts of a work, which, in some measure, is become my own. If the poem of *Fingal* met with the applause of persons of genuine taste, I should also hope, that *Temora* will not displease them.

But what renders *Temora* infinitely more

A DISSERTATION. xxxj

valuable than Fingal, is the light it throws on the history of the times. The first population of Ireland, its first kings, and several circumstances, which regard its connection of old with the south and north of Britain, are presented to us, in several episodes. The subject and catastrophe of the poem are founded upon facts, which regarded the first peopling of that country, and the contests between the two British nations, which originally inhabited it. — In a preceding part of this dissertation, I have shewn how superior the probability of Ossian's traditions is to the undigested fictions of the Irish bards, and the more recent and regular legends of both Irish and Scottish historians. I mean not to give offence to the abettors of the high antiquities of the two nations, though I have all along expressed my doubts, concerning the veracity and abilities of those who deliver down their antient history. For my own part, I prefer the national fame, arising from a few certain facts, to the legendary and uncertain annals of ages of remote and obscure antiquity. No kingdom now established in Europe, can pretend to equal antiquity with that of the Scots, even according to my system, so that it is altogether needless to fix their origin a fictitious millennium before.

Since the publication of the poems contained in the first volume, many insinuations have

xxxij A DISSERTATION.

been made, and doubts arisen, concerning their authenticity. I shall, probably, hear more of the same kind after the present poems shall make their appearance. Whether these suspicions are suggested by prejudice, or are only the effects of ignorance of facts, I shall not pretend to determine. — To me they give no concern, as I have it always in my power to remove them. An incredulity of this kind is natural to persons, who confine all merit to their own age and country. These are generally the weakest, as well as the most ignorant, of the people. Indolently confined to a place, their ideas are narrow and circumscribed. — It is ridiculous enough to see such people as these are, branding their ancestors, with the despicable appellation of barbarians. Sober reason can easily discern, where the title ought to be fixed with more propriety.

As prejudice is always the effect of ignorance, the knowing, the men of true taste, despise and dismiss it. If the poetry is good, and the characters natural and striking, to them it is a matter of indifference, whether the heroes were born in the little village of Angles in Juteland, or natives of the barren heaths of Caledonia. That honour which nations derive from ancestors, worthy, or renowned, is merely ideal. It may buoy up the minds of individuals, but it contributes very

A DISSERTATION. xxxii ;

little to their importance in the eyes of others. —But of all those prejudices which are incident to narrow minds, that which measures the merit of performances by the vulgar opinion, concerning the country which produced them, is certainly the most ridiculous. Ridiculous, however, as it is, few have the courage to reject it; and, I am thoroughly convinced, that a few quaint lines of a Roman or Greek epigrammatist, if dug out of the ruins of Herculaneum, would meet with more cordial and universal applause, than all the most beautiful and natural rhapsodies of all the Celtic bards and Scandinavian Scalders that ever existed.

While some doubt the authenticity of the compositions of Ossian, others strenuously endeavour to appropriate them to the Irish nation. Though the whole tenor of the poems sufficiently contradict so absurd an opinion, it may not be improper, for the satisfaction of some, to examine the narrow foundation, on which this extraordinary claim is built.

Of all the nations descended from the ancient *Celta*, the Scots and Irish are the most similar in language, customs, and manners. This argues a more intimate connection between them, than a remote descent from the great Celtic stock. It is evident, in short, that, at some one period or other, they

xxxiv A DISSERTATION.

formed one society, were subject to the same government, and were, in all respects, one and the same people. How they became divided, which the colony, or which the mother nation, does not fall now to be discussed. The first circumstance that induced me to disregard the vulgarly-received opinion of the Hibernian extraction of the Scottish nation, was my observations on their antient language. That dialect of the Celtic tongue, spoken in the north of Scotland, is much more pure, more agreeable to its mother language, and more abounding with primitives, than that now spoken, or even that which has been writ for some centuries back, amongst the most unmixed part of the Irish nation. A Scotchman, tolerably conversant in his own language, understands an Irish composition, from that derivative analogy which it has to the *Galic* of North-Britain. An Irishman, on the other hand, without the aid of study, can never understand a composition in the *Galic* tongue.—This affords a proof, that the *Scotch Galic* is the most original, and, consequently, the language of a more antient and unmixed people. The Irish, however backward they may be to allow any thing to the prejudice of their antiquity, seem inadvertently to acknowledge it, by the very appellation they give to the dialect they speak.—They call their own language *Cælic Eirinach*, i. e.

A DISSERTATION. xxxv

Caledonian Irish, when, on the contrary, they call the dialect of North-Britain a *Caëlic* or the *Caledonian tongue*, emphatically. A circumstance of this nature tends more to decide which is the most antient nation, than the united testimonies of a whole legion of ignorant bards and *senachies*, who, perhaps, never dreamed of bringing the Scots from Spain to Ireland, till some one of them, more learned than the rest, discovered, that the Romans called the first *Iberia*, and the latter *Hibernia*. On such a slight foundation were probably built those romantic fictions, concerning the Milesians of Ireland.

From internal proofs it sufficiently appears, that the poems published under the name of Ossian, are not of Irish composition. The favourite chimæra, that Ireland is the mother-country of the Scots, is totally subverted and ruined. The fictions concerning the antiquities of that country, which were forming for ages, and growing as they came down, on the hands of successive *senachies* and *fileas*, are found, at last, to be the spurious brood of modern and ignorant ages. To those who know how tenacious the Irish are, of their pretended *Iberian* descent, this alone is proof sufficient, that poems, so subversive of their system, could never be produced by an Hibernian bard.—But when we look to the language,

xxxvj A DISSERTATION.

it is so different from the Irish dialect, that it would be as ridiculous to think, that Milton's *Paradise Lost* could be wrote by a Scottish peasant, as to suppose, that the poems ascribed to Ossian were writ in Ireland.

The pretensions of Ireland to Ossian proceed from another quarter. There are handed down, in that country, traditional poems, concerning the *Fiona*, or the heroes of *Fion Mac Comnal*. This *Fion*, say the Irish annalists, was general of the militia of Ireland, in the reign of Cormac, in the third century. Where Keating and O'Flaherty learned, that Ireland had an *embodied* militia so early, is not easy for me to determine. Their information certainly did not come from the Irish poems, concerning *Fion*. I have just now, in my hands, all that remain, of those compositions; but, unluckily for the antiquities of Ireland, they appear to be the work of a very modern period. Every stanza, nay almost every line, affords striking proofs, that they cannot be three centuries old. Their allusions to the manners and customs of the fifteenth century, are so many, that it is matter of wonder to me, how any one could dream of their antiquity. They are entirely writ in that romantic taste, which prevailed two ages ago.—Giants, enchanted castles, dwarfs, palfreys, witches and magicians form

A DISSERTATION. xxxvi;

the whole circle of the poet's invention. The celebrated *Fion* could scarcely move from one hillock to another, without encountering a giant, or being entangled in the circles of a magician. Witches, on broomsticks, were continually hovering round him, like crows; and he had freed enchanted virgins in every valley in Ireland. In short, *Fion*, great as he was, passed a disagreeable life. — Not only had he to engage all the mischiefs in his own country: foreign armies invaded him, assisted by magicians and witches, and headed by kings, as tall as the main-mast for a first rate. — It must be owned, however, that *Fion* was not inferior to them in height.

A chos air *Cromleach*, druim-ard,
Chos eile air *Crom-meal* dubh,
Thoga *Fion* le lamh mhoir
An d'uisge o *Lubhair* na fruth.

With one foot on *Cromleach* his brow,
The other on *Crommal* the dark,
Fion took up with his large hand
The water from *Lubar* of the streams.

Cromleach and *Crommal* were two mountains in the neighbourhood of one another, in Ulster, and the river *Lubar* ran through the intermediate valley. The property of such a monster as this *Fion*, I should never

xxxviii] A DISSERTATION.

have disputed with any nation. But the bard himself, in the poem, from which the above quotation is taken, cedes him to Scotland.

FION O ALBIN, *fiol nan laoich.*

FION from ALBION, *race of heroes!*

Were it allowable to contradict the authority of a bard, at this distance of time, I should have given as my opinion, that this enormous *Fion* was of the race of the Hibernian giants, of Ruannus, or some other celebrated name, rather than a native of Caledonia, whose inhabitants, now at least, are not remarkable for their stature.

If *Fion* was so remarkable for his stature, his heroes had also other extraordinary properties. *In weight all the sons of strangers yielded to the celebrated Ton-iotal; and for hardness of skull, and, perhaps, for thickness too of the valiant Osear stood unrivalled and alone.* Ossian himself had many singular and less delicate qualifications, than playing on the harp; and the brave Cuchullin was of so diminutive a size, as to be taken for a child of two years of age, by the gigantic Swaran. To illustrate this subject, I shall here lay before the reader, the history of some of the Irish poems, concerning *Fion Mac Comnal*. A translation of these pieces, if well executed, might afford satisfaction

A DISSERTATION. xxxix

to the public. But this ought to be the work of a native of Ireland. To draw forth, from obscurity, the poems of my own country has afforded ample employment to me; besides, I am too diffident of my own abilities, to undertake such a work. A gentleman in Dublin accused me to the public, of committing blunders and absurdities, in translating the language of my own country, and that before any translation of mine appeared (1). How the gentleman came to

(1) In Faulkner's Dublin Journal, of the 1st December, 1761, appeared the following Advertisement:

Speedily will be published, by a gentleman of this kingdom, who hath been, for some time past, employed in translating and writing Historical Notes to

FINGAL, A POEM,

Originally wrote in the Irish or Erse language. In the preface to which, the translator, who is a perfect master of the Irish tongue, will give an account of the manners and customs of the antient Irish or Scotch; and, therefore, most humbly intreats the public, to wait for his edition, which will appear in a short time, as he will set forth all the blunders and absurdities in the edition now printing in London, and shew the ignorance of the English translator, in his knowledge of Irish grammar, not understanding any part of that accidence.

21 A DISSERTATION.

see my blunders before I committed them; is not easy to determine; if it did not conclude, that, as a Scotchman, and, of course descended of the Milesian race, I might have committed some of those oversights, which, perhaps very unjustly, are said to be peculiar to them.

From the whole tenor of the Irish poems, concerning the *Fiona*, it appears, that *Fion Mac Comnal* flourished in the reign of Cormac, which is placed, by the universal consent of the *senachies*, in the third century. They even fix the death of Fingal in the year 286, yet his son Ossian is made contemporary with St. Patrick, who preached the gospel in Ireland, about the middle of the fifth age. Ossian, though, at that time, he must have been two hundred and fifty years of age, had a daughter young enough to become wife to the saint. On account of this family connection, *Patrick of the Psalms*, for so the apostle of Ireland is emphatically called in the poems, took great delight in the company of Ossian, and in hearing the great actions of his family. The saint sometimes threw off the austerity of his profession; drunk freely, and had his soul properly warmed with wine, in order to hear, with becoming enthusiasm, the poems of his father-in-law. One of the poems begins with this piece of useful information.

A DISSERTATION. xli

Lo don rabh PADRIC na mhúr ,
 Gun *Sailm* air uidh , ach a gól ,
 Ghluais é thigh *Ossian* mhic *Fhion* ,
 O farr leis bu bhinn a ghloir .

The title of this poem is *Teantach mor na Fiona*. It appears to have been founded on the same story with the *battle of Lora* , one of the poems of the genuine *Ossian*. The circumstances and catastrophe in both are much the same ; but the *Irish Ossian* discovers the age in which he lived , by an unlucky anachronism. After describing the total route of Erragon , he very gravely concludes with this remarkable anecdote , that none of the foe escaped , but a few , who were allowed to go on a pilgrimage to the *Holy Land*. This circumstance fixes the date of the composition of the piece some centuries after the famous croisade : for , it is evident , that the poet thought the time of the croisade so antient , that he confounds it with the age of Fingal. — Erragon , in the course of this poem , is often called ,

Riogh *Lochlin* an do shloigh ,
King of Denmark of two nations ,

which alludes to the union of the kingdoms of Norway and Denmark , a circumstance which brings down the date of the piece to an æra not far remote. Modern , how-

xlij A DISSERTATION.

ver, as this pretended Ossian was, it is certain, he lived before the Irish had dreamed of appropriating *Fion*, or *Fingal*, to themselves. He concludes the poem, with this reflection :

Na fagha se comhthróm nan n'arm,
Erragon Mac Annir nan lánn glas
‘San n’ALBIN ní n’ abairtair Triath
Agus ghlaioite an n’ *Fhiona* as.

« Had Erragon, son of Annir of gleaming swords, avoided the equal contest of arms, (single combat) no chief should have afterwards been numbered in ALBION, and the heroes of Fion should no more be named. »

The next poem that falls under our observation is *Cath-cabhra*, or, *The death of Oscar*. This piece is founded on the same story which we have in the first book of *Temora*. So little thought the author of *Cath-cabhra* of making Oscar his countryman, that, in the course of two hundred lines, of which the poem consists, he puts the following expression thrice in the mouth of the hero :

ALBIN an sa d’roina m’arach. —

ALBION where I was born and bred,

A DISSERTATION. xliij

The poem contains almost all the incidents in the first book of Temora. In one circumstance the bard differs materially from Ossian. Oscar, after he was mortally wounded by Cairbar, was carried by his people to a neighbouring hill, which commanded a prospect of the séa. A fleet appeared at a distance, and the hero exclaims with joy,

Loingcas mo shean-athair ar' án
 'S iad a tiachd le cabhair chugain,
 O ALBIN na n' ioma sluagh.

« It is the fleet of my grandfather, coming with aid to our field, from ALBION of many waves ! »—The testimony of this bard is sufficient to confute the idle fictions of Keating and O'Flaherty ; for, though he is far from being antient, it is probable, he flourished a full century before these historians.—He appears, however, to have been a much better christian than chronologer ; for *Fion*, though he has placed two centuries before St. Patrick, very devoutly recommends the soul of his grandson to his Redeemer.

Duan a Gharibh Mac-Starn is another Irish poem in high repute. The grandeur of its images, and its propriety of sentiment, might have induced me to give a translation of it, had not I some expectations of seeing it in the collection of the Irish Ossian's

xliv A DISSERTATION.

poems, promised more than a year since, to the public. The author descends sometimes from the region of the sublime to low and indecent description; the last of which, the Irish translator, no doubt, will choose to leave in the obscurity of the original.— In this piece Cuchullin is used with very little ceremony, for he is oft called the *dog of Tara*, in the county of Meath. This severe title of the *redoutable Cuchullin*, the most renowned of Irish champions, proceeded from the poet's ignorance of etymology. *Cu*, voice, or commander, signifies also a *dog*. The poet chose the last, as the most noble appellation for his hero.

The subject of the poem is the same with that of the epic poem of Fingal. *Garibh Mac-Starn* is the same with Ossian's Swaran, the son of Starno. His single combats with, and his victory over all heroes of Ireland, excepting the *celebrated dog of Tara*, i. e. Cuchullin, afford matter for two hundred lines of tolerable poetry. *Garibh's* progress in search of Cuchullin, and his intrigue with the gigantic Emir-bragal, that hero's wife, enables the poet to extend his piece to four hundred lines. This author, it is true, makes Cuchullin a native of Ireland; the gigantic Emir-bragal he calls *the guiding star of the women of Ireland*. The property of this enormous lady I shall not dispute with him, or any other. But, as he

A DISSERTATION. xlv

speaks with great tenderness of the *daughters of the convent*, and throws out some hints against the English nation, it is probable he lived in too modern a period to be intimately acquainted with the genealogy of Cuchullin.

Another Irish Ossian, for there were many, as appears from their difference in language and sentiment, speaks very dogmatically of *Fion Mac Comnal*, as an Irishman. Little can be said for the judgment of this poet, and less for his delicacy of sentiment. The history of one of his episodes may, at once, stand as a specimen of his want of both. Ireland, in the days of *Fion*, happened to be threatened with invasion, by three great potentates, the kings of Lochlin, Sweden, and France. It is needless to insist upon the impropriety of a French invasion of Ireland; it is sufficient for me to be faithful to the language of my author. *Fion*, upon receiving intelligence of the intended invasion, sent Ca-olt, Ossian, and Oscar, to watch the bay, in which, it was apprehended, the enemy was to land. Oscar was the worst choice of a scout that could be made: for, brave as he was, he had the bad property of falling very often asleep on his post, nor was it possible to awake him, without cutting off one of his fingers, or dashing a large stone against his head. When the ene-

xlvi A DISSERTATION.

my appeared, Oscar, very unfortunately; was asleep. Ossian and Ca-olt consulted about the method of wakening him, and they, at last, fixed on the stone, as the less dangerous expedient.

Gun thog Caoilte a chlach, nach gán,
Agus a n' aighai' chiean gun bhuail;
Tri mil an tulloch gun chri', &c.

« Ca-olt took up a heavy stone, and struck it against the hero's head. The hill shook for three miles, as the stone rebounded and rolled away. » Oscar rose in wrath, and his father gravely desired him to spend his rage on his enemies, which he did to so good purpose, that he singly routed a whole wing of their army. The confederate kings advanced, notwithstanding, till they came to a narrow pass, possessed by the celebrated Ton-iosal. This name is very significant of the singular property of the hero who bore it. Ton-iosal, though brave, was so heavy and unwieldy, that, when he sat down, it took the whole force of an hundred men to set him upright on his feet again. Luckily for the preservation of Ireland, the hero happened to be standing when the enemy appeared, and he gave so good an account of them, that *Fion*, upon his arrival, found little to do, but to divide the spoil among his soldiers.

A DISSERTATION. xlvij

All these extraordinary heroes, Fion, Ossian, Oscar and Ca-olt, says the poet, were

Siol ERIN na gorm lánn.

The sons of ERIN of blue steel.

Neither shall I much dispute the matter with him : He has my consent also to appropriate to Ireland the celebrated Ton-iosal. I shall only say, that they are different persons from those of the same name, in the Scotch poems ; and that, though the stupendous valour of the first is so remarkable, they have not been equally lucky with the latter, in their poet. It is somewhat extraordinary, that *Fion*, who lived some ages before St. Patrick, swears like a very good christian :

Air an Dia do chum gach bae.

By God, who shaped every case.

It is worthy of being remarked, that, in the line quoted, Ossian, who lived in St. Patrick's days, seems to have understood something of the English, a language not then subsisting. A person, more sanguine for the honour of his country than I am, might argue, from this circumstance, that this pretendedly Irish Ossian was a native of Scotland ; for my countrymen are universally

xlviij A DISSERTATION.

allowed to have an exclusive right to the second-sight.

From the instances given, the reader may form a compleat idea of the Irish compositions concerning the *Fiona*. The greatest part of them make the heroes of *Fion*,

Siol ALBIN a n'nioma caoile. —

The race of ALBION of many firths.

The rest make them natives of Ireland. But; the truth is, that their authority is of little consequence on either side. From the instances I have given, they appear to have been the work of a very modern period. The pious ejaculations they contain, their allusions to the manners of the times, fix them to the fifteenth century. Had even the authors of these pieces avoided all allusions to their own times, it is impossible that the poems could pass for antient, in the eyes of any person tolerably conversant with the Irish tongue. The idiom is so corrupted and so many words borrowed from the English, that that language must have made considerable progress in Ireland before the poems were writ.

It remains now to shew, how the Irish bards begun to appropriate Ossian and his heroes to their own country. After the English conquest, many of the natives of Ireland,

A DISSERTATION. xlii

Ireland, averse to a foreign yoke, either actually were in a state of hostility with the conquerors, or at least, paid little regard to their government. The Scots, in those ages, were often in open war, and never in cordial friendship with the English. The similarity of manners and language, the traditions concerning their common origin, and above all, their having to do with the same enemy, created a free and friendly intercourse between the Scottish and Irish nations. As the custom of retaining bards and *senachies* was common to both; so each, no doubt, had formed a system of history, it matters not how much soever fabulous, concerning their respective origin. It was the natural policy of the times, to reconcile the traditions of both nations together, and, if possible, to deduce them from the same original stock.

The Saxon manners and language had, at that time, made great progress in the south of Scotland. The antient language, and the traditional history of the nation, became confined entirely to the inhabitants of the Highlands, then fallen, from several concurring circumstances, into the last degree of ignorance and barbarism. The Irish, who, for some ages before the conquest, had possessed a competent share of that kind of learning, which then prevailed in Europe,

I. A DISSERTATION.

found it no difficult matter to impose their own fictions on the ignorant Highland *senachies*, by flattering the vanity of the Highlanders, with their long list of Heremonian kings and heroes, they, without contradiction, assumed to themselves the character of being the mother-nation of the Scots of Britain. At this time, certainly, was established that Hibernian system of the original of the Scots, which afterwards, for want of any other, was universally received. The Scots of the low-country, who, by losing the language of their ancestors, lost, together with it, their national traditions, received, implicitly, the history of their country, from Irish refugees, or from Highland *senachies*, persuaded over into the Hibernian system.

These circumstances are far from being ideal. We have remaining many particular traditions, which bear testimony to a fact, of itself abundantly probable. What makes the matter incontestible is, that the antient traditional accounts of the genuine origin of the Scots, have been handed down without interruption. Though a few ignorant *senachies* might be persuaded out of their own opinion, by the smoothness of an Irish tale, it was impossible to eradicate, from among the bulk of the people, their own national traditions. These traditions afterwards so

A DISSERTATION. Ij

much prevailed, that the Highlanders continue totally unacquainted with the pretended Hibernian extract of the Scots nation. Ignorant chronicle writers, strangers to the antient language of their country, preserved only from falling to the ground, so improbable a story.

It was, during the period I have mentioned, that the Irish became acquainted with, and carried into their country, the compositions of Ossian. The scene of many of the pieces being in Ireland, suggested first to them a hint, of making both heroes and poet natives of that Island. In order to do this effectually, they found it necessary, to reject the genuine poems, as every line was pregnant with proofs of their Scottish original, and to dress up a fable, on the same subject, in their own language. So ill qualified, however, were their bards to effectuate this change, that amidst all their desires to make the *Fiona* Irishmen, they every now and then call them *Siol Albin*. It was, probably, after a succession of some generations, that the bards had effrontery enough to establish an Irish genealogy for *Fion*, and deduce him from the Milesian race of kings. In some of the oldest Irish poems, on the subject; the great-grandfather of *Fion* is made a Scandinavian; and his heroes are often called *Siol Lochlin Na Beum*; i. e. the race of *Lochlin* of wounds.

liij A DISSERTATION.

The only poem that runs up the family of *Fion* to Nuades Niveus, king of Ireland, is evidently not above a hundred and fifty years old; for if I mistake not, it mentions the Earl of Tyrone, so famous in Elizabeth's time.

This subject, perhaps, is pursued further than it deserves; but a discussion of the pretensions of Ireland to Ossian, was become in some measure necessary. If the Irish poems, concerning the *Fiona*, should appear ridiculous, it is but justice to observe, that they are scarcely more so than the poems of other nations, at that period. On other subjects, the bards of Ireland have displayed a genius worthy of any age or nation. It was, alone, in matters of antiquity, that they were monstrous in their fables. Their love-sonnets, and their elegies on the death of persons worthy or renowned, abound with such beautiful simplicity of sentiment, and wild harmony of numbers, that they become more than an attonement for their errors, in every other species of poetry. But the beauty of these pieces, depend so much on a certain *curiosa felicitas* of expression in the original, that they must appear much to disadvantage in another language.



BOOK FIRST.

C iij

ARGUMENT to BOOK I.

Cairbar, the son of Borbar-duthul, lord of Atha in Connaught, the most potent chief of the race of the Firbolg, having murdered, at Temora the royal palace, Cormac the son of Artho, the young king of Ireland, usurped the throne. Cormac was lineally descended from Conar the son of Trenmor, the great-grand-father of Fingal, king of those Caledonians who inhabited the western coast of Scotland. Fingal resented the behaviour of Cairbar, and resolved to pass over into Ireland, with an army, to re-establish the royal family on the Irish throne. Early intelligence of his designs coming to Cairbar, he assembled some of his tribes in Ulster, and, at the same time, ordered his brother Cathmor to follow him speedily with an army, from Temora. Such was the situation of affairs when the Caledonian fleet appeared on the coast of Ulster.

The poem opens in the morning. Cairbar is represented as retired from the rest of the army, when one of his scouts brought him news of the landing of Fingal. He assembles a council of his chiefs. Foldath the chief of Moma haughtily despises the enemy; and is reprimanded warmly by Malithos. Cairbar, after hearing their debate, orders a feast to be prepared, to which, by his

4 ARGUMENT to BOOK I.

bard Olla, he invites Oscar the son of Ossian; resolving to pick a quarrel with that hero, and so have some pretext for killing him. Oscar came to the feast; the quarrel happened; the followers of both fought, and Cairbar and Oscar fell by mutual wounds. The noise of the battle reached Fingal's army. The king came on, to the relief of Oscar, and the Irish fell back to the army of Cathmor, who was advanced to the banks of the river Lubar, on the heath of Moilena. Fingal, after mourning over his grandson, ordered Ullin the chief of his bards to carry his body to Morven, to be there interred. Night coming on, Althan, the son of Conachar, relates to the king the particulars of the murder of Cormac. Fillan, the son of Fingal, is sent to observe the motions of Cathmor by night, which concludes the action of the first day. The scene of this book is a plain, near the hill of Mora, which rose on the borders of the heath of Moilena, in Ulster.

TEMORA:

AN

EPIC POEM (1).

BOOK FIRST.

THE blue waves of Ullin roll in light:
The green hills are covered with day. Trees
shake their dusky heads in the breeze. Grey

(1) The first book of Temora made its appearance in the collection of lesser pieces, which were subjoined to the epic poem of Fingal. When that collection was printed, little more than the opening of the present poem came, in a regular connection, to my hands. The second book, in particular, was very imperfect and confused. By means of my friends, I collected since all the broken fragments of Temora, that I formerly wanted; and the story of the poem, which was accurately preserved by many, enabled me to reduce it into that order in which it now appears. The title of Epic was imposed on the poem by myself. The technical terms of criticism were totally unknown to Ossian. Born in a distant age, and in a country remote from the seats of learning, his knowledge did not extend to Greek and Roman literature. If therefore, in the form of his poems, and in several passages of his diction, he resembles Homer, the similarity must proceed from nature, the original from which

torrents pour their noisy streams.—Two green hills, with aged oaks, surround a narrow plain. The blue course of a stream is

both drew their ideas. It is from this consideration that I have avoided, in this volume, to give parallel passages from other authors, as I had done, in some of my notes, on the former collection of Ossian's poems. It was far from my intention to raise my author into a competition with the celebrated names of antiquity. The extensive field of renown affords ample room to all the poetical merit which has yet appeared in the world, without overturning the character of one poet, to raise that of another on its ruins. Had Ossian even superior merit to Homer and Virgil, a certain partiality, arising from the fame deservedly bestowed upon them by the sanction of so many ages, would make us overlook it, and give them the preference. Tho' their high merit does not stand in need of adventitious aid, yet it must be acknowledged, that it is an advantage to their fame, that the posterity of the Greeks and Romans, either do not at all exist, or are not now objects of contempt or envy to the present age.

Tho' this poem of Ossian has not perhaps all the *minutiae*, which Aristotle, from Homer, lays down as necessary to the conduct of an epic poem, yet, it is presumed, it has all the grand essentials of the epopœa. Unity of time, place, and action is preserved throughout. The poem opens in the midst of things; what is necessary of preceding transactions to be known, is introduced by episodes afterwards; not formally brought in, but seemingly rising immediately from the situation of affairs. The circumstances are grand, and the diction animated; neither descending into a cold meanness, nor swelling into ridiculous bombast.

BOOK I. AN EPIC POEM.

7

there; on its banks stood Cairbar (1) of Atha.—His spear supports the king: the red eyes of his fear are sad. Cormac rises in his soul, with all his ghastly wounds. The grey form of the youth appears in darkness; blood pours from his airy sides.—Cairbar thrice threw his spear on earth; and thrice he stroked his beard. His steps are short; he often stops: and tosses his sinewy arms. He is like a cloud in the desert, that varies its form to every blast: the valleys are sad around, and fear, by turns, the shower.

The king, at length, resumed his soul; and took his pointed spear. He turned his

The reader will find some alterations in the diction of this book. These are drawn from more correct copies of the original which came to my hands, since the former publication. As the most part of the poem is delivered down by tradition, the text is sometimes various and interpolated. After comparing the different readings, I always made choice of that which agreed best with the spirit of the context.

(1) Cairbar, the son of Borbar-duthul, was descended lineally from Larthon the chief of the Firbolg, the first colony who settled in the south of Ireland. The Caël were in possession of the northern coast of that kingdom, and the first monarchs of Ireland were of their race. Hence arose those differences between the two nations, which terminated, at last, in the murder of Cormac, and the usurpation of Cairbar, lord of Atha, who is mentioned in this place.

8 T E M O R A : B O O K I

eyes to Moi-lena. The scouts of blue ocean came. They came with steps of fear, and often looked behind. Cairbar knew that the mighty were near, and called his gloomy chiefs.

The sounding steps of his warriors came. They drew, at once, their swords. There Morlath (1) stood with darkened face. Hidalla's long hair sighs in wind. Red-haired Cormar bends on his spear, and rolls his side-long-looking eyes. Wild is the look of Malthos from beneath two shaggy brows. —Foldath stands like an oozy rock, that covers its dark sides with foam. His spear is like Slimora's fir, that meets the wind of heaven. His shield is marked with the strokes of battle; and his red eye despises danger. These and a thousand other chiefs surrounded car-borne Cairbar, when the scout of ocean came, Mor-annal, from streamy Moi-lena.

(1) Mór-lath, *great in the day of battle*. Hidalla's *mildly looking hero*. Cor-mar, *expert at sea*. Máthos, *slow to speak*. Foldath, *generous*.

Foldath, who is here strongly marked, makes a great figure in the sequel of the poem. His fierce, uncomplying character is sustained throughout. He seems, from a passage in the second book, to have been Cairbar's greatest confident, and to have had a principal hand in the conspiracy against Cormac king of Ireland. His tribe was one of the most considerable of the race of the Firbolg.

BOOK I. AN EPIC POEM. 9

—His eyes hang forward from his face, his lips are trembling, pale.

Do the chiefs of Erin stand, he said, silent as the grove of evening? Stand they, like a silent wood, and Fingal on the coast? Fingal, the terrible in battle, the king of streamy Morven.—Hast thou seen the warrior? said Cairbar with a sigh. Are his heroes many on the coast? Lifts he the spear of battle? Or comes the king in peace?

In peace he comes not, Cairbar. I have seen his forward spear (1). It is a meteor of death: the blood of thousands is on its steel.—He came first to the shore, strong in the grey hair of age. Full rose his sinewy limbs, as he strode in his might. That sword is by his side, which gives no second (2)

(1) Mor-annal here alludes to the particular appearance of Fingal's spear. — If a man, upon his first landing in a strange country, kept the point of his spear forward, it denoted in those days that he came in a hostile manner, and accordingly he was treated as an enemy; if he kept the point behind him, it was a token of friendship, and he was immediately invited to the feast, according to the hospitality of the times.

(2) This was the famous sword of Fingal, made by Luno, a smith of Lochlin, and after him poetically called the *son of Luno*: it is said of this sword, that it killed a man at every stroke; and that Fingal never used it but in times of the greatest danger.

wound. His shield is terrible, like the bloody moon ascending thro' a storm.—Then came Ossian king of songs; and Morni's son, the first of men. Connal leaps forward on his spear: Dermid spreads his dark-brown locks.—Fillan bends his bow, the young hunter of streamy Moruth (1).—But who is that before them, like the dreadful course of a stream! It is the son of Ossian, bright between his locks. His long hair falls on his back.—His dark brows are half inclosed in steel. His sword hangs loose on his side. His spear glitters as he moves. I fled from his terrible eyes, king of high Temora!

Then fly, thou feeble man, said Foldath in gloomy wrath: fly to the grey streams of thy land, son of the little soul! Have not I seen that Oscar? I beheld the chief in war. He is of the mighty in danger: but there are others who lift the spear.—Erin has many sons as brave, king of Temora of Groves! Let Foldath meet him in the strength of his course, and stop this mighty stream.—My spear is covered with the blood of the valiant; my shield is like the wall of Tura.

(1) In some traditions Fergus the son of Fingal, and Usnoth chief of Etha, immediately follow Fillan in the list of the chiefs of Morven; but as they are not afterwards mentioned at all in the poem, I look upon the whole sentence to be an interpolation, and have therefore rejected it.

BOOK I. AN EPIC POEM. 11

Shall Foldath (1) alone meet the foe?
replied the dark-browed Malthos. Are they
not numerous on our coast, like the waters
of many streams? Are not these the chiefs
who vanquished Swaran, when the sons of
Erin fled? And shall Foldath meet their
bravest heroes? Foldath of the heart of pride!
take the strength of the people; and let
Malthos come. My sword is red with slaughter,
but who has heard my words (2)?

Sons of green Erin, said Hidalla (3),
let not Fingal hear your words. The foe
might rejoice, and his arm be strong in the
land.—Ye are brave, O warriors, and like
the storms of the desert; they meet the rocks
without fear, and overturn the woods.—But
let us move in our strength, slow as a gathered

(1) The opposite characters of Foldath and Malthos are strongly marked in subsequent parts of the poem. They appear always in opposition. The feuds between their families, which were the source of their hatred to one another, are mentioned in other poems.

(2) That is, who has heard my vaunting? He intended the expression as a rebuke to the self-praise of Foldath.

(3) Hidalla was the chief of Clonra, a small district on the banks of the lake of Lego. The beauty of his person, his eloquence and genius for poetry are afterwards mentioned.

cloud.—Then shall the mighty tremble ; the spear shall fall from the hand of the valiant.—We see the cloud of death, they will say, while shadows fly over their face. Fingal will mourn in his age, and see his flying fame.—The steps of his chiefs will cease in Morven : the moss of years shall grow in Selma.

Cairbar heard their words, in silence, like the cloud of a shower : it stands dark on Cromla, till the lightning bursts its sides : the valley gleams with red light ; the spirits of the storm rejoice.—So stood the silent king of Temora ; at length his words are heard.

Spread the feast on Moi-lena : let my hundred bards attend. Thou, red-hair'd Olla, take the harp of the king. Go to Oscar chief of swords, and bid him to our feast. To-day we feast and hear the song ; to-morrow break the spears. Tell him that I have raised the tomb of Cathol (1) ; that bards have sung

(1) Cathol the son of Maronnan, or Moran, was murdered by Cairbar, for his attachment to the family of Cormac. He had attended Oscar to the war of *Inis-rhona*, where they contracted a great friendship for one another. Oscar immediately after the death of Cathol, had sent a formal challenge to Cairbar, which he prudently declined, but conceived a secret hatred against Oscar, and had beforehand contrived to kill him at the feast, to which he here invites him.

to his ghost.—Tell him that Cairbar has heard his fame at the stream of resounding Carun (1). Cathmor (2) is not here, Borbar-duthul's generous race. He is not here with his thousands, and our arms are weak. Cathmor is a foe to strife at the feast: his soul is bright as that sun. But Cairbar shall fight with Oscar, chiefs of the woody Temora! His words for Cathol were many; the wrath of Cairbar burns. He shall fall on Moi-lena: my fame shall rise in blood.

(1) He alludes to the battle of Oscar against Caros, king of ships; who is supposed to be the same with Carausius the usurper.

(2) Cathmor, *great in battle*, the son of Borbar-duthul, and brother of Cairbar king of Ireland, had, before the insurrection of the Firbolg, passed over into Inis-huna, supposed to be a part of South-Britain, to assist Conmor king of that place, against his enemies. Cathmor was successful in the war, but, in the course of it, Conmor was either killed, or died a natural death. Cairbar, upon intelligence of the designs of Fingal to dethrone him, had dispatched a messenger for Cathmor, who returned into Ireland a few days before the opening of the poem.

Cairbar here takes advantage of his brother's absence, to perpetrate his ungenerous designs against Oscar; for the noble spirit of Cathmor, had he been present, would not have permitted the laws of that hospitality, for which he was so renowned himself, to be violated. The brothers form a contrast: we do not detest the mean soul of Cairbar more, than we admire the disinterested and generous mind of Cathmor.

Their faces brightened round with joy. They spread over *Moi-lena*. The feast of shells is prepared. The songs of bards arise. We heard (1) the voice of joy on the coast: we thought that mighty *Cathmor* came. *Cathmor* the friend of strangers! the brother of red-haired *Cairbar*. Their souls were not the same. The light of heaven was in the bosom of *Cathmor*. His towers rose on the

(1) *Fingal's* army heard the joy that was in *Cairbar's* camp. The character given of *Cathmor* is agreeable to the times. Some, through ostentation, were hospitable; and others fell naturally into a custom handed down from their ancestors. But what marks strongly the character of *Cathmor*, is his aversion to praise; for he is represented to dwell in a wood to avoid the thanks of his guests; which is still a higher degree of generosity than that of *Axylus* in *Homer*: for the poet does not say, but the good man might, at the head of his own table, have heard with pleasure the praise bestowed on him by the people he entertained.

No nation in the world carried hospitality to a greater length than the antient Scots. It was even infamous, for many ages, in a man of condition, to have the door of his house shut at all, *LEST*, as the bards express it, *THE STRANGER SHOULD COME AND BEHOLD HIS CONTRACTED SOUL*. Some of the chiefs were possessed of this hospitable disposition to an extravagant degree; and the bards, perhaps upon a selfish account, never failed to recommend it, in their eulogiums. *Cean-uia' na dai'*, or *the point to which all the roads of the strangers lead*, was an invariable epithet given by them to the chiefs; on the contrary, they distin-

BOOK I. AN EPIC POEM. 15

banks of Atha: seven paths led to his halls. Seven chiefs stood on the paths, and called the stranger to the feast; but Cathmor dwelt in the wood to avoid the voice of praise.

Olla came with his songs. Oscar went to Cairbar's feast. Three hundred warriors strode along Moi-lena of the streams. The grey dogs

guished the inhospitable by the title of *the cloud which the strangers shun*. This last however was so uncommon, that in all the old poems I have ever met with, I found but one man branded with this ignominious appellation; and that, perhaps, only founded upon a private quarrel, which subsisted between him and the patron of the bard, who wrote the poem.

We have a story of this hospitable nature, handed down by tradition, concerning one of the first Earls of Argyle. This nobleman, hearing that an Irishman, of great quality, intended to make him a visit, with a very numerous retinue of his friends and dependants, burnt the castle of Dunora, the seat of his family, lest it should be too small to entertain his guests, and received the Irish in tents on the shore. Extravagant as this behaviour might seem in our days, it was admired and applauded in those times of hospitality, and the Earl acquired considerable fame by it, in the songs of the bards.

The open communication with one another, which was the consequence of their hospitality, did not a little tend to improve the understanding and enlarge the ideas of the antient Scots. It is to this cause, we must attribute that sagacity and sense, which the common people, in the highlands,

bounded on the heath, their howling reached afar. Fingal saw the departing hero : the soul of the king was sad. He dreaded Cairbar's gloomy thoughts, amidst the feast of shells.

My son raised high the spear of Cormac :
an hundred bards met him with songs. Cairbar
concealed with smiles the death that was dark

possess, still, in a degree superior even to the vulgar of more polished countries. When men are crowded together in great cities, they see indeed many people, but are acquainted with few. They naturally form themselves into small societies, and their knowledge scarce extends beyond the alley or street they live in : add to this that the very employment of a mechanic tends to contract the mind. The ideas of a peasant are still more confined. His knowledge is circumscribed within the compass of a few acres ; or, at most, extends no further than the nearest market-town. The manner of life among the inhabitants of the highlands is very different from these. As their fields are barren, they have scarce any domestic employment. Their time is spent therefore in an extensive wilderness, where they feed their cattle, and these, by straying far and wide, carry their keepers after them, at times, to all the different settlements of the clans. There they are received with hospitality and good cheer, which, as they tend to display the minds of the hosts, afford an opportunity to the guests to make their observations on the different characters of men ; which is the true source of knowledge and acquired sense. Hence it is that a common highlander is acquainted with a greater number of characters, than any of his own rank living in the most populous cities.

in his soul. The feast is spread, the shells
resound: joy brightens the face of the host.
But it was like the parting beam of the sun,
when he is to hide his red head in a storm.

Cairbar rose in his arms; darkness gathered
on his brow. The hundred harps ceased at
once. The clang (1) of shields was heard.
Far distant on the heath Olla raised his
song of woe. My son knew the sign of death;
and rising seized his spear.

Oscar! said the dark-red Cairbar, I behold
the spear (2) of Inisfail. The spear of
Temora (3) glitters in thy hand, son of

(1) When a chief was determined to kill a person
already in his power, it was usual to signify that
his death was intended, by the sound of a shield
struck with the blunt end of a spear; at the same
time that a bard at a distance raised the *death-song*.
A ceremony of another kind was long used in
Scotland upon such occasions. Every body has
heard that a bull's head was served up to Lord
Douglas in the castle of Edinburgh, as a certain
signal of his approaching death.

(2) Cormac, the son of Arth, had given the
spear, which is here the foundation of the quarrel,
to Oscar, when he came to congratulate him, upon
Swaran's being expelled from Ireland.

(3) *Ti-mor-rath*, the house of good fortune, the
name of the royal palace of the supreme kings of
Ireland.

woody Morven ! It was the pride of an hundred (1) kings, the death of heroes of old. Yield it, son of Ossian, yield it to car-borne Cairbar.

Shall I yield, Oscar replied, the gift of Erin's injured king : the gift of fair-haired Cormac, when Oscar scattered his foes ! I came to Cormac's halls of joy, when Swaran fled from Fingal. Gladness rose in the face of youth : he gave the spear of Temora. Nor did he give it to the feeble, O Cairbar, neither to the weak in soul. The darkness of thy face is no storm to me ; nor are thine eyes the flames of death. Do I fear thy clanging shield ? Tremble I at Olla's song ? No : Cairbar, frighten the feeble ; Oscar is a rock.

And wilt thou not yield the spear ? replied the rising pride of Cairbar. Are thy words so mighty, because Fingal is near ? Fingal with aged locks, from Morven's hundred groves ! He has fought with little men. But he must vanish before Cairbar, like a thin pillar of mist before the winds of Atha (2).

(1) *Hundred* here is an indefinite number, and is only intended to express a great many. It was probably the hyperbolical phrases of bards, that gave the first hint to the Irish *Senachies* to place the origin of their monarchy in so remote a period, as they have done.

(2) *Atha*, shallow river : the name of Cairbar's seat in Connaught.

BOOK I. AN EPIC POEM. 19

Were he who fought with little men,
near Atha's darkening chief: Atha's darkening
chief would yield green Erin his rage. Speak
not of the mighty, O Cairbar! but turn thy
sword on me. Our strength is equal: but
Fingal is renowned! the first of mortal men!

Their people saw the darkening chiefs.
Their crowding steps are heard around. Their
eyes roll in fire. A thousand swords are half
unsheathed. Red-haired Olla raised the song
of battle: the trembling joy of Oscar's soul
arose: the wonted joy of his soul, when
Fingal's horn was heard.

Dark as the swelling wave of ocean before
the rising winds, when it bends its head
near a coast, came on the host of Cairbar.
—Daughter of Toscar (1)! why that tear?
He is not fallen yet. Many were the deaths
of his arm before my hero fell!—Behold
they fall before my son like the groves in
the desert, when an angry ghost rushes
through night, and takes their green heads
in his hand! Morlath falls: Maronnan dies:
Conachar trembles in his blood. Cairbar
shrinks before Oscar's sword, and creeps
in darkness behind his stone. He lifted the

(1) The poet means Malvina, the daughter of
Toscar, to whom he addresses that part of the
poem, which relates to the death of Oscar her
lover.

spear in secret, and pierced my Oscar's side. He falls forward on his shield: his knee sustains the chief. But still his spear is in his hand.—See gloomy Cairbar (1) falls! The steel pierced his fore-head, and divided his

(1) The Irish historians place the death of Cairbar, in the latter end of the third century: they say, he was killed in battle against Oscar the son of Ossian, but deny that he fell by his hand. As they have nothing to go upon but the traditions of their bards, the translator thinks that the account of Ossian is as probable: at the worst, it is but opposing one tradition to another.

It is, however, certain, that the Irish historians disguise, in some measure, this part of their history. An Irish poem on this subject, which, undoubtedly, was the source of their information, concerning the battle of Gabhra, where Cairbar fell, is just now in my hands. The circumstances are less to the disadvantage of the character of Cairbar, than those related by Ossian. As a translation of the poem (which, tho' evidently no very antient composition, does not want poetical merit) would extend this note to too great a length, I shall only give the story of it, in brief, with some extracts from the original Irish.

Oscar, says the Irish bard, was invited to a feast, at Temora, by Cairbar king of Ireland. A dispute arose between the two heroes, concerning the exchange of spears, which was usually made, between the guests and their host, upon such occasions. In the course of their altercation, Cairbar said, in a boastful manner, that he would hunt on the hills of Albion, and carry the spoils of
red

BOOK I. AN EPIC POEM. 11

red hair behind. He lay, like a shattered rock, which Cromla shakes from its shaggy side. But never more shall Oscar rise! he leans on his bossy shield. His spear is in his terrible hand: Erin's sons stood distant and dark. Their shouts arose, like crowded streams; Moi-lena echoed wide.

it into Ireland, in spite of all the efforts of its inhabitants. The original words are;

Briathar buan sin; Briathar buan

A bheireadh an Cairbre rua',

Gu tuga' se sealg, agus creach

A h'ALBIN an la'r na mhaireach.

Oscar replied, that, the next day, he himself would carry into Albion the spoils of the five provinces of Ireland; in spite of the opposition of Cairbar.

Briathar eile an aghai' sin

A bheirea' an t'Oscar, og, calma

Gu'n tugadh se sealg agus creach

Do dh'ALBIN an la'r na mhaireach, &c.

Oscar, in consequence of his threats, begun to lay waste Ireland; but as he returned with the spoil into Ulster, through the narrow pass of Gabhra (*Caoilghlen-Ghabhra*) he was met, by Cairbar, and a battle ensued, in which both the heroes fell by mutual wounds. The bard gives a very curious list of the followers of Oscar, as they marched to battle. They appear to have been five hundred in number, commanded, as the poet expresses it, by *five heroes of the blood of kings*. This poem mentions Fingal, as arriving from Scotland, before Oscar died of his wounds.

Fingal heard the sound; and took his father's spear. His steps are before us on the heath. He spoke the words of woe. I hear the noise of war. Young Oscar is alone. Rise, sons of Morven; join the hero's sword.

Ossian rushed along the heath. Fillan bounded over Moi-lena. Fingal strode in his strength, and the light of his shield is terrible. The sons of Erin saw it far distant; they trembled in their souls. They knew that the wrath of the king arose: and they foresaw their death. We first arrived; we fought; and Erin's chiefs withstood our rage. But when the king came, in the sound of his course, what heart of steel could stand! Erin fled over Moi-lena. Death pursued their flight.

We saw Oscar on his shield. We saw his blood around. Silence darkened every face. Each turned his back and wept. The king strove to hide his tears. His grey beard whistled in the wind. He bent his head above his son. His words were mixed with sighs.

And art thou fallen, Oscar, in the midst of thy course? the heart of the aged beats over thee! He sees thy coming wars. The wars which ought to come he sees, but they are cut off from thy fame. When shall joy dwell at Selma? When shall grief depart

from Morven? My sons fall by degrees:
 Fingal shall be the last of his race. The
 fame which I have received shall pass away:
 my age will be without friends. I shall sit
 a grey cloud in my hall: nor shall I hear the
 return of a son, in the midst of his sounding
 arms. Weep, ye heroes of Morven! never
 more shall Oscar rise!

And they did weep, O Fingal; dear was
 the hero to their souls. He went out to battle,
 and the foes vanished; he returned, in
 peace, amidst their joy. No father mourned
 his son slain in youth; no brother his bro-
 ther of love. They fell, without tears, for
 the chief of the people was low! Bran (1)
 is howling at his feet: gloomy Luath is sad,
 for he had often led them to the chace; to
 the bounding roe of the desert.

When Oscar saw his friends around, his
 breast arose with sighs. — The groans, he
 said, of aged chiefs, the howling of my
 dogs, the sudden bursts of songs of grief,
 have melted Oscar's soul. My soul, that
 never melted before; it was like the steel
 of my sword. — Ossian, carry me to my

(1) Bran was one of Fingal's dogs. — He was
 so remarkable for his fleetness, that the poet, in
 a piece which is not just now in the translator's
 hands, has given him the same properties with
 Virgil's Camilla. Bran signifies a mountain-stream.

hills ! Raise the stones of my renown. Place the horn of the deer, and my sword within my narrow dwelling. — The torrent hereafter may raise the earth : the hunter may find the steel and say, « This has been Oscar's sword. »

And fallest thou, son of my fame ! And shall I never see thee, Oscar ! When others hear of their sons, I shall not hear of thee. The moss is on thy four grey stones ; the mournful wind is there. The battle shall be fought without him : he shall not pursue the dark-brown hinds. When the warrior returns from battles, and tells of other lands ; I have seen a tomb, he will say, by the roaring stream, the dark dwelling of a chief. He fell by car-borne Oscar, the first of mortal men. — I, perhaps, shall hear his voice ; and a beam of joy will rise in my soul.

The night would have descended in sorrow, and morning returned in the shadow of grief : our chiefs would have stood like cold dropping rocks on Moi-lena, and have forgot the war, did not the king disperse his grief, and raise his mighty voice. The chiefs, as new-wakened from dreams, lift up their heads around.

How long on Moi-lena shall we weep ;
or pour our tears in Ullin ? The mighty

BOOK I. AN EPIC POEM. 15

will not return. Oscar shall not rise in his strength. The valiant must fall one day, and be no more known on his hills.—Where are our fathers, O warriors! the chiefs of the times of old? They have set like stars that have shone; we only hear the sound of their praise. But they were renowned in their day, the terror of other times. Thus shall we pass, O warriors! in the day of our fall. Then let us be renowned when we may; and leave our fame behind us, like the last beams of the sun, when he hides his red head in the west.

Ullin, my aged bard! take the ship of the king. Carry Oscar to Selma of harps. Let the daughters of Morven weep. We shall fight in Erin for the race of fallen Cormac. The days of my years begin to fail: I feel the weakness of my arm. My fathers bend from their clouds, to receive their grey-hair'd son. But, before I go hence, one beam of fame shall rise: so shall my days end, as my years begun, in fame: my life shall be one stream of light to bards of other times.

Ullin rais'd his white sails: the wind of the south came forth. He bounded on the waves towards Selma.—(1) I remained in

(1) The poet speaks in his own person.

my grief, but my words were not heard.—
The feast is spread on Moi-lena : an hundred
heroes reared the tomb of Cairbar : but no
song is raised over the chief : for his soul
had been dark and bloody. The bards re-
membered the fall of Cormac ! what could
they say in Cairbar's praise?

The night came rolling down. The light
of an hundred oaks arose. Fingal sat beneath
a tree. Old Althan (1) stood in the midst.
He told the tale of fallen Cormac. Althan
the son of Conachar, the friend of car-borne
Cuchullin : he dwelt with Cormac in windy
Temora, when Semo's son fought with
generous Torlath.—The tale of Althan was
mournful, and the tear was in his eye.

(2) The setting sun was yellow on Dora (3).
Grey evening began to descend. Temora's
woods shook with the blast of the unconstant
wind. A cloud, at length, gathered in the
west, and a red star looked from behind its

(1) Althan, the son of Conachar, was the
chief bard of Arth king of Ireland. After the death
of Arth, Althan attended his son Cormac, and
was present at his death. — He had made his
escape from Cairbar, by the means of Cathmor,
and coming to Fingal, related, as here, the death
of his master Cormac.

(2) Althan speaks.

(3) Doira, the woody side of a mountain ; it is
here a hill in the neighbourhood of Temora.

edge.—I stood in the wood alone, and saw a ghost on the darkening air. His stride extended from hill to hill : his shield was dim on his side. It was the son of Semo : I knew the warrior's face. But he passed away in his blast; and all was dark around. — My soul was sad. I went to the hall of shells. A thousand lights arose : the hundred bards had strung the harp. Cormac stood in the midst, like the morning star, when it rejoices on the eastern hill, and its young beams are bathed in showers.—The sword of Artho (1) was in the hand of the king; and he looked with joy on its polished studs : thrice he strove to draw it, and thrice he failed; his yellow locks are spread on his shoulders : his cheeks of youth are red.—I mourned over the beam of youth, for he was soon to set.

Althan ! he said, with a smile, hast thou beheld my father? Heavy is the sword of the king, surely his arm was strong. O that I were like him in battle, when the rage of his wrath arose ! then would I have met, like Cuchullin, the car-borne son of Cantéla ! But years may come on, O Althan ! and my arm be strong.—Hast thou heard of Semo's son, the chief of high Temora? He might have returned with his fame; for he promised

(1) Arth or Artho, the father of Cormac king of Ireland.

to return to-night. My bards wait him with songs; my feast is spread in Temora.

I heard the king in silence. My tears began to flow. I hid them with my aged locks; but he perceived my grief.

Son of Conachar! he said, is the king of Tura (1) low? Why bursts thy sigh in secret? And why descends the tear?—Comes the car-borne Torlath? Or the sound of the red-haired Cairbar?—They come!—for I behold thy grief. Mossy Tura's king is low!—Shall I not rush to battle?—But I cannot lift the spear!—O had mine arm the strength of Cuchullin, soon would Cairbar fly; the fame of my fathers would be renewed; and the deeds of other times!

He took his bow. The tears flow down; from both his sparkling eyes.—Grief saddens round: the bards bend forward, from their hundred harps. The lone blast touched their trembling strings. The sound (2) is sad and low.

(1) Cuchullin is called the king of Tura from a castle of that name on the coast of Ulster, where he dwelt, before he undertook the management of the affairs of Ireland, in the minority of Cormac.

(2) The prophetic sound, mentioned in other poems, which the harps of the bards emitted before the death of a person worthy and renowned. It is here an omen of the death of Cormac, which, soon after, followed.

BOOK I. AN EPIC POEM. 29

A voice is heard at a distance, as of one in grief; it was Carril of other times, who came from dark Slimora (1).—He told of the death of Cuchullin, and of his mighty deeds. The people were scattered round his tomb: their arms lay on the ground. They had forgot the war, for he, their fire, was seen no more.

But who, said the soft-voiced Carril, come like the bounding roes? their stature is like the young trees of the plain, growing in a shower:—Soft and ruddy are their cheeks; but fearless souls look forth from their eyes.—Who but the sons of Usnoth (2), the car-borne chiefs

(1) Slimora, a hill in Connaught, near which Cuchullin was killed.

(2) Usnoth chief of Etha, a district on the western coast of Scotland, had three sons, Nathos, Althos and Ardan, by Slissama the sister of Cuchullin. The three brothers, when very young, were sent over to Ireland by their father, to learn the use of arms under their uncle, whose military fame was very great in that kingdom. They had just arrived in Ulster when the news of Cuchullin's death arrived. Nathos, the eldest of the three brothers, took the command of Cuchullin's army, and made head against Cairbar the chief of Atha. Cairbar having, at last, murdered young king Cormac, at Temora, the army of Nathos shifted sides, and the brothers were obliged to return into Ulster, in order to pass over into Scotland. The sequel of their mournful story is related, at large, in the poem of Dar-thula,

of Echa? The people rise on every side, like the strength of an half-extinguished fire, when the winds come; sudden, from the desert, on their rustling wings.—The sound of Caithbat's (1) shield was heard. The heroes saw Cuchullin (2) in Nathos. So rolled his sparkling eyes: his steps were such on heath.—Battles are fought at Lego: the sword of Nathos prevails. Soon shalt thou behold him in thy halls, king of Temora of Groves!

And soon may I behold the chief! replied the blue-eyed king. But my soul is sad for Cuchullin; his voice was pleasant in mine ear.—Often have we moved, on Dora, to the chace of the dark-brown hinds: his bow was unerring on the mountains.—He spoke of mighty men. He told of the deeds of my fathers; and I felt my joy.—But sit thou at the feast, O bard, I have often heard thy voice. Sing in the praise of Cuchullin; and of that mighty stranger (3).

Day rose on woody Temora, with all the beams of the east. Trathin came to the hall,

(1) Caithbait was grandfather to Cuchullin; and his shield was made use of to alarm his posterity to the battles of the family.

(2) That is, they saw a manifest likeness between the person of Nathos and Cuchullin.

(3) Nathos the son of Uínoth.

BOOK I. AN EPIC POEM. 31

the son of old Gelláma (1).—I behold, he said, a dark cloud in the desert, king of Innisfail! a cloud it seemed at first, but now a croud of men. One strides before them in his strength; his red hair flies in wind. His shield glitters to the beam of the east. His spear is in his hand.

Call him to the feast of Temora, replied the king of Erin. My hall is the house of strangers, son of the generous Gelláma!—Perhaps it is the chief of Etha, coming in the sound of his renown.—Hail, mighty (2) stranger, art thou of the friends of Cormac?—But Carril, he is dark, and unlovely; and he draws his sword. Is that the son of Usnoth, bard of the times of old?

It is not the son of Usnoth, said Carril, but the chief of Atha.—Why comest thou in thy arms to Temora, Cairbar of the gloomy brow? Let not thy sword rise against Cormac. Whither dost thou turn thy speed?

He passed on in his darkness, and seized the hand of the king. Cormac foresaw his death, and the rage of his eyes arose.—Retire, thou gloomy chief of Atha: Nathos comes with battle.—Thou art bold in Cormac's hall, for his arm is weak.—The sword entered the

(1) Geal-lamha, *white-handed*.

(2) From this expression, we understand, that Cairbar had entered the palace of Temora, in the midst of Cormac's speech,

side of the king: he fell in the halls of his fathers. His fair hair is in the dust. His blood is smoking round.

And art thou fallen in thy halls (1), O son of noble Artho? The shield of Cuchullin was not near. Nor the spear of thy father. Mournful are the mountains of Erin, for the chief of the people is low!—Blest be thy soul, O Cormac! thou art darkened in thy youth.

My words came to the ears of Cairbar, and he closed us (2) in the midst of darkness. He feared to stretch his sword to the bards (3), though his soul was dark. Long had we pined alone: at length, the noble Cathmor (4) came.—He heard our voice from the cave; he turned the eye of his wrath on Cairbar.

Chief of Atha! he said, how long wilt thou

(1) Althan speaks.

(2) That is, himself and Carril, as it afterwards appears.

(3) The persons of the bards were so sacred, that even he, who had just murdered his sovereign, feared to kill them.

(4) Cathmor appears the same disinterested hero upon every occasion. His humanity and generosity were unparalleled: in short, he had no fault, but too much attachment to so bad a brother as Cairbar. His family-connection with Cairbar prevails, as he expresses it, over every other consideration, and makes him engage in a war, of which he did not approve.

pain my soul? Thy heart is like the rock of the desert; and thy thoughts are dark.—But thou art the brother of Cathmor, and he will fight thy battles.—But Cathmor's soul is not like thine, thou feeble hand of war! The light of my bosom is stained with thy deeds: the bards will not sing of my renown. They may say, « Cathmor was brave, but he fought for gloomy Cairbar. » They will pass over my tomb in silence: my fame shall not be heard.—Cairbar! loose the bards: they are the sons of other times. Their voice shall be heard in other years; after the kings of Temora have failed.—

We came forth at the words of the chief. We saw him in his strength. He was like thy youth, O Fingal, when thou first didst lift the spear.—His face was like the plain of the sun, when it is bright: no darkness travelled over his brow. But he came with his thousands to Ullin; to aid the red-haired Cairbar: and now he comes to revenge his death, O king of woody Morven!—

And let him come, replied the king; I love a foe like Cathmor. His soul is great; his arm is strong, his battles are full of fame.—But the little soul is a vapour that hovers round the marshy lake: it never rises on the green hill, lest the winds should meet it there: its dwelling is in the cave, it sends forth the dart of death.

Our young heroes, O warriors, are like the renown of our fathers.—They fight in youth; they fall: their names are in the song. Fingal is amidst his darkening years. He must not fall, as an aged oak, across a secret stream. Near it are the steps of the hunter, as it lies beneath the wind. « How has that tree fallen? » He, whistling, strides along.

Raise the song of joy, ye bards of Morven, that our souls may forget the past.—The red stars look on us from the clouds, and silently descend. Soon shall the grey beam of the morning rise, and shew us the foes of Cormac.—Fillan! take the spear of the king; go to Mora's dark-brown side. Let thine eyes travel over the heath, like flames of fire. Observe the foes of Fingal, and the course of generous Cathmor. I hear a distant sound, like the falling of rocks in the desert.—But strike thou thy shield, at times, that they may not come through night, and the fame of Morven cease.—I begin to be alone, my son, and I dread the fall of my renown.

The voice of the bards arose. The king leaned on the shield of Trenmor.—Sleep descended on his eyes; his future battles rose in his dreams. The host are sleeping around. Dark-haired Fillan observed the foe. His steps are on a distant hill: we hear, at times, his clanging shield.

TEMORA:

AN

EPIC POEM.

BOOK SECOND.

THE
HISTORY OF THE
CITY OF
NEW YORK
FROM
THE
FIRST
SETTLEMENT
TO
THE
PRESENT
TIME
BY
JOHN
ROBERTSON
1852

T. E. M. O. R. A.

A. N.
E. P. I. O. P. O. E. M.

BOOK (SECOND)
THE
HISTORY OF THE
CITY OF
NEW YORK
FROM
THE
FIRST
SETTLEMENT
TO
THE
PRESENT
TIME
BY
JOHN
ROBERTSON
1852

THE
HISTORY OF THE
CITY OF
NEW YORK
FROM
THE
FIRST
SETTLEMENT
TO
THE
PRESENT
TIME
BY
JOHN
ROBERTSON
1852

ARGUMENT to BOOK II.

This book opens, we may suppose, about midnight, with a soliloquy of Ossian, who had retired, from the rest of the army, to mourn for his son Oscar. Upon hearing the noise of Cathmor's army approaching, he went to find out his brother Fillan, who kept the watch, on the hill of Mora, in the front of Fingal's army. In the conversation of the brothers, the episode of Conar, the son of Trenmor, who was the first king of Ireland, is introduced, which lays open the origin of the contests between the Caël and Firbolg, the two nations who first possessed themselves of that Island. Ossian kindles a fire on Mora; upon which Cathmor desisted from the design he had formed of surprising the army of the Caledonians. He calls a council of his chiefs; reprimands Foldath for advising a night-attack, as the Irish army were so much superior in number to the enemy. The bard Fonar introduces the story of Crothar, the ancestor of the king, which throws further light on the history of Ireland, and the original pretensions of the family of Atha, to the throne of that kingdom. The Irish chiefs lie down to rest, and Cathmor himself undertakes the watch. In his circuit, round the army, he is met by Ossian. The interview of the two heroes is described. Cathmor

38 ARGUMENT to BOOK II.

obtains a promise from Ossian, to order a funeral elegy to be sung over the grave of Cairbar; it being the opinion of the times, that the souls of the dead could not be happy, till their elegies were sung by a bard. Morning comes. Cathmor and Ossian part; and the latter, casually meeting with Carril the son of Kinfena, sends that bard, with a funeral song, to the tomb of Cairbar.

T E M O R A :

A N

E P I C P O E M.

BOOK SECOND.

(1) **F**ATHER of heroes, Trenmor! dweller
of eddying winds! where the dark-red course
of thunder marks the troubled clouds! Open
thou thy stormy halls, and let the bards of
old be near: let them draw near, with their
songs and their half viewless harps. No dwel-
ler of misty valley comes; no hunter unknown

(1) Addresses to the spirits of deceased warriors are common, in the compositions of Ossian. He, however, expresses them in such language as prevents all suspicion of his paying divine honours to the dead, as was usual among other nations. — From the sequel of this apostrophe, it appears, that Ossian had retired from the rest of the army to mourn, in secret, over the death of his son Oscar. This indirect method of narration has much of the nature of the Drama, and is more forcible than a regular historical chain of circumstances. The abrupt manner of Ossian may often render him obscure to inattentive readers. Those who retain his poems, on memory, seem to be sensible of this; and usually give the history of the pieces minutely, before they begin to repeat the poetry.

at his streams; but the car-borne Oscar from the folds of war. Sudden is thy change, my son, from what thou wert on dark Moi-lena! The blast folds thee in its skirt, and rustles along the sky.

Dost thou not behold thy father, at the stream of night? The chiefs of Morven sleep far-distant. They have lost no son. But ye have lost a hero, Chiefs of streamy Morven! Who could equal his strength, when battle rolled against his side, like the darkness of crowded waters? — Why this cloud on Ossian's soul? It ought to burn in danger. Erin is near with her host. The king of Morven is alone.—Alone thou shalt not be, my father, while I can lift the spear.

I rose, in my rattling arms. I listened to

Tho' this book has little action, it is not the least important part of Temora. The poet, in several episodes, runs up the cause of the war to the very source. The first population of Ireland, the wars between the two nations who originally possessed that island, its first race of kings, and the revolutions of its government, are important facts, and are delivered by the poet, with so little mixture of the fabulous, that one cannot help preferring his accounts to the improbable fictions of the Scotch and Irish historians. The Milesian fables of those gentlemen bear about them the marks of a late invention. To trace their legends to their source would be no difficult task; but a disquisition of this sort would extend this note too far.

BOOK II. AN EPIC POEM. 41

the wind of night. The shield of Fillan (1) is not heard. I shook for the son of Fingal. Why should the foe come, by night; and the dark-haired warrior fail? — Distant, sullen murmurs rise: like the noise of the lake of Lego, when its waters shrink, in the days of frost, and all its bursting ice resounds. The people of Lara look to heaven, and foresee the storm.—My steps are forward on the heath: the spear of Oscar in my hand. Red stars looked from night.—I saw Fillan silent before me, bending forward from Mora's rock. He heard the shout of the foe; the joy of his soul arose.

(1) We understand, from the preceding book, that Cathmor was near with an army. When Cairbar was killed, the tribes who attended him fell back to Cathmor; who, as it afterwards appears, had taken a resolution to surprize Fingal by night. Fillan was dispatched to the hill of Mora, which was in the front of the Caledonians, to observe the motions of Cathmor. In this situation were affairs when Ossian, upon hearing the noise of the approaching enemy, went to find out his brother. Their conversation naturally introduces the episode, concerning Conar the son of Trenmor the first Irish monarch, which is so necessary to the understanding the foundation of the rebellion and usurpation of Cairbar and Cathmor.—Fillan was the youngest of the sons of Fingal, then living. He and Bosmin, mentioned in the *battle of Lora*, were the only children of the king, by Clatho the daughter of Cathulla king of Inis-tore, whom he had taken to wife, after the death of Ros-crana, the daughter of Cormac Mac-Conar king of Ireland.

He heard my sounding tread, and turned
his lifted spear.

Comest thou, son of night, in peace? Or
dost thou meet my wrath? The foes of Fingal
are mine. Speak, or fear my steel.—I stand,
not in vain, the shield of Morven's race.

Never mayst thou stand in vain, son of
blue-eyed Clatho. Fingal begins to be alone;
darkness gathers on the last of his days. Yet
he has two (1) sons who ought to shine in
war. Who ought to be two beams of light,
near the steps of his departure.

Son of Fingal, replied the youth, it is not
long since I raised the spear. Few are the
marks of my sword in battle, but my soul

(1) That is, two sons in Ireland. Fergus, the
second son of Fingal, was, at that time, on an
expedition, which is mentioned in one of the
lesser poems of Ossian. He, according to some
traditions, was the ancestor of Fergus, the son
of Erc or Arcath, commonly called *Fergus the
second* in the Scotch histories. The beginning of the
reign of Fergus, over the Scots, is placed, by the
most approved annals of Scotland, in the fourth
year of the fifth age: a full century after the death
of Ossian. The genealogy of his family is recorded
thus by the highland *Senachies*; *Fergus Mac-Arcath
Mac-Chongael, Mac-Fergus, Mac-Fiongael na buai*:
i. e. Fergus the son of Arcath, the son of Congal,
the son of Fergus, the son of Fingal *the victorious*.
This subject is treated more at large, in the dis-
sertation prefixed to the poem.

is fire. The chiefs of Bolga (1) crowd
around the shield of generous Cathmor.
Their gathering is on that heath. Shall my
steps approach their host? I yielded to Oscar
alone, in the strife of the race, on Cona.

Fillan, thou shalt not approach their host;
nor fall before thy fame is known. My name
is heard in song: when needful I advance.—
From the skirts of night I shall view their
gleaming tribes.—Why, Fillan, didst thou
speak of Oscar, to call forth my sigh? I must
forget (2) the warrior, till the storm is

(1) The southern parts of Ireland went, for
some time, under the name of Bolga, from the
Fir-bolg or Belgæ of Britain, who settled a colony
there. *Bolg* signifies a quiver, from which proceeds
Fir-bolg, i. e. bow-men; so called from their using
bows, more than any of the neighbouring nations.

(2) It is remarkable, that, after this passage,
Oscar is not mentioned in all Temora. The situations
of the characters who act in the poem are so interesting,
that others, foreign to the subject, could not be
introduced with any lustre. Tho' the episode, which
follows, may seem to flow naturally enough from
the conversation of the brothers, yet I have shewn,
in a preceding note, and, more at large, in the
dissertation prefixed to this collection, that the
poet had a farther design in view. It is highly
probable, tho' the Irish annalists do not agree with
Ossian in other particulars, that the Conar here
mentioned is the same with their *Conar-mór*, i. e.
Conar the great, whom they place in the first century.

rolled away. Sadness ought not to dwell in danger, nor the tear in the eye of war. Our fathers forgot their fallen sons, till the noise of arms was past. Then sorrow returned to the tomb, and the song of bards arose.

Conar (1) was the brother of Trathal, first of mortal men. His battles were on every coast. A thousand streams rolled down the blood of his foes. His fame filled green Erin, like a pleasant gale. The nations gathered in Ullin, and they blessed the king of the race of their fathers, from the land of hinds.

(1) Conar, the first king of Ireland, was the son of Trenmor, the great-grand-father of Fingal. It was on account of this family-connection, that Fingal was engaged in so many wars in the cause of the race of Conar. Tho' few of the actions of Trenmor are mentioned in Ossian's poems, yet, from the honourable appellations bestowed on him, we may conclude that he was, in the days of the poet, the most renowned name of antiquity. The most probable opinion concerning him is, that he was the first, who united the tribes of the Caledonians, and commanded them, in chief, against the incursions of the Romans. The genealogists of the North have traced his family far back, and given a list of his ancestors to *Cuanmór nan lan*, or Conmor of the swords, who according to them, was the first who crossed the *great sea*, to Caledonia, from which circumstance his name proceeded, which signifies *Great ocean*. Genealogies of so ancient a date, however, are little to be depended upon.

The

The chiefs (1) of the south were gathered, in the darkness of their pride. In the horrid cave of Moma, they mixed their secret words. Thither often, they said, the spirits of their fathers came; shewing their pale forms from the chinky rocks, and reminding them of the honor of Bolga.—Why should Conar reign, the son of streamy Morven?

They came forth, like the streams of the desert, with the roar of their hundred tribes. Conar was a rock before them: broken they rolled on every side. But often they returned, and the sons of Ullin fell. The king stood, among the tombs of his warriors, and darkly bent his mournful face. His soul was rolled into itself; he marked the place, where he was to fall; when Trathal came, in his strength, the chief of cloudy Morven.—Nor did he come alone; Colgar (2) was

(1) The chiefs of the Fir-bolg who possessed themselves of the south of Ireland, prior, perhaps, to the settlement of the *Caël* of Caledonia, and the Hebrides, in Ulster. From the sequel, it appears that the Fir-bolg were, by much, the most powerful nation; and it is probable that the *Caël* must have submitted to them, had they not received succours from their mother-country, under the command of Conar.

(2) Colg-er. *fiercely-looking warrior*. Sulin-corma; *blue eyes*. Colgar was the eldest of the sons of Trathal: Comhal, who was the father of Fingal, was very young when the present expedition to

at his side; Colgar the son of the king and of white-bosomed Solin-corma.

As Trenmor, cloathed with meteors; descends from the halls of thunder, pouring the dark storm before him, over the troubled sea: so Colgar descended to battle, and wasted the echoing field. His father rejoiced over the hero: but an arrow came. His tomb was raised, without a tear. The king was to revenge his son. — He lightened forward in battle, till Bolga yielded at her streams.

When peace returned to the land, and his blue waves bore the king to Morven: then he remembered his son, and poured the silent tear. Thrice did the bards, at the cave of Furmóno, call the soul of Colgar. They called him to the hills of his land; he heard them in his mist. Trathal placed his sword in the cave, that the spirit of his son might rejoice.

Ireland happened. It is remarkable, that, of all his ancestors, the poet makes the least mention of Comhal; which, probably, proceeded from the unfortunate life and untimely death of that hero. From some passages, concerning him, we learn, indeed, that he was brave, but he wanted conduct, and, as Ossian expresses it, *his soul was dark*. This impartiality, with respect to a character so near him, reflects honour on the poet.

BOOK II. AN EPIC POEM. 47

(1) Colgar, son of Trathal, said Fillan, thou wert renowned in youth! But the king hath not marked my sword, bright-streaming on the field. I go forth with the crowd: I return, without my fame.—But the foe approaches, Ossian. I hear their murmur on the heath. The sound of their steps is like thunder, in the bosom of the ground, when the rocking hills shake their groves, and not a blast pours from the darkened sky.

Sudden I turned on my spear, and raised the flame of an oak on high. I spread it large, on Mora's wind. Cathmor stopt in his course.—Gleaming he stood, like a rock, on whose sides are the wandering of blasts; which seize its echoing streams and clothe them over with ice. So stood the friend (2) of strangers. The winds lift his

(1) The poet begins here to mark strongly the character of Fillan, who is to make so great a figure in the sequel of the poem. He has the impatience, the ambition and fire which are peculiar to a young hero. Kindled with the fame of Colgar, he forgets his untimely fall.—From Fillan's expressions in this passage, it would seem, that he was neglected by Fingal, on account of his youth.

(2) Cathmor is distinguished, by this honourable title, on account of his generosity to strangers, which was so great as to be remarkable even in those days of hospitality.

heavy locks. Thou art the tallest of the race of Erin, king of streamy Atha!

First of bards, said Cathmor, Fonar (1), call the chiefs of Erin. Call red-hair'd Cormar, dark-browed Malthos, the side-long-looking gloom of Marónan. Let the pride of Foldath appear: the red-rolling eye of Turlótho. Nor let Hidalla be forgot; his voice, in danger, is like the sound of a shower, when it falls in the blasted vale, near Atha's failing stream.

They came, in their clanging arms. They bent forward to his voice, as if a spirit of their fathers spoke from a cloud of night.— Dreadful shone they to the light; like the fall of the stream of Brumo (2), when the meteor

(1) *Fónar*, the man of song. Before the introduction of Christianity a name was not imposed upon any person, till he had distinguished himself by some remarkable action, from which his name should be derived. Hence it is that the names in the poems of Ossian, suit so well with the characters of the persons who bear them.

(2) *Brumo* was a place of worship (Fing. b. 6.) in Craca, which is supposed to be one of the isles of Shetland. It was thought, that the spirits of the deceased haunted it, by night, which adds more terror to the description introduced here. *The horrid circle of Brumo, where often, they said, the ghosts of the dead howled round the stone of fear.* Fing.

lights it, before the nightly stranger. Shuddering, he stops in his journey, and looks up for the beam of the morn.

(1) Why delights Foldath, said the king, to pour the blood of foes, by night? Fails his arm in battle, in the beams of day? Few are the foes before us, why should we clothe us in mist? The valiant delight to shine, in the battles of their land.—

Thy counsel was in vain, chief of Moma; the eyes of Morven do not sleep. They are watchful, as eagles, on their mossy rocks.— Let each collect, beneath his cloud, the strength of his roaring tribe. To-morrow I move, in light, to meet the foes of Bolga!— Mighty (2) was he, that is low, the race of Borbar-duthul!

(1) From this passage, it appears, that it was Foldath who had advised the night-attack. The gloomy character of Foldath is properly contrasted to the generous, the open Cathmor. Ossian is peculiarly happy in opposing different characters, and, by that means, in heightening the features of both. Foldath appears to have been the favourite of Cairbar, and it cannot be denied but he was a proper enough minister to such a prince. He was cruel and impetuous, but seems to have had great martial merit.

(2) By this exclamation Cathmor intimates that he intends to revenge the death of his brother Cairbar.

Not unmarked, said Foldath, were my steps before thy race. In light, I met the foes of Cairbar; the warrior praised my deeds.—But his stone was raised without a tear? No bard sung (1) over Erin's king; and shall his foes rejoice along their mossy hills?—No: they must not rejoice: he was the friend of Foldath. Our words were mixed, in secret, in Moma's silent cave; whilst thou, a boy in the field, pursuedst the thistle's beard.—With Moma's sons I shall rush abroad, and find the foe, on his dusky hills. Fingal shall lie without his song, the grey-haired king of Selma.

Dost thou think, thou feeble man, replied the chief of Atha; dost thou think that he can fall, without his fame, in Erin? Could the bards be silent, at the tomb of the mighty Fingal? The song would burst in secret; and the spirit of the king rejoice.—It is when thou shalt fall, that the bard shall forget the song. Thou art dark, chief of Moma, tho' thine arm is a tempest in war.—Do I forget the king of Erin, in his narrow house? My soul is not lost to Cairbar, the brother of my

(1) To have no funeral elegy sung over his tomb, was, in those days, reckoned the greatest misfortune that could befall a man; as his soul could not otherwise be admitted to the *airy hall* of his fathers.

BOOK II. AN EPIC POEM. 31

love. I marked the bright beams of joy ,
which travelled over his cloudy mind , when
I returned , with fame , to Atha of the
streams.

Tall they removed , beneath the words
of the king ; each to his own dark tribe ;
where , humming , they rolled on the heath ,
faint-glittering to the stars : like waves , in
the rocky bay , before the nightly wind.—
Beneath an oak , lay the chief of Atha :
his shield , a dusky round , hung high. Near
him , against a rock , leaned the stranger (1)
of Inis-huna : that beam of light , with
wandering locks , from Lumon of the roes.
—At distance rose the voice of Fonar , with
the deeds of the days of old. The song fails ,
at times , in Lubar's growing roar.

(2) Crothar , begun the bard , first dwelt

(1) By the stranger of Inis-huna , is meant Sulmalla ,
the daughter of Conmor king of Inis-huna , the
ancient name of that part of South-Britain , which
is next to the Irish coast.—She had followed
Cathmor in disguise. Her story is related at large
in the fourth book.

(2) Crothar was the ancestor of Cathmor , and
the first of his family , who had settled in Atha.
It was in his time , that the first wars were kindled
between the Fir-bolg and Caél. The propriety of the
episode is evident ; as the contest which originally
rose between Crothar and Conar , subsided afterwards

at Atha's mossy stream. A thousand (1) oaks,
 from the mountains, formed his echoing
 hall. The gathering of the people was there,
 around the feast of the blue-eyed king.—
 But who, among his chiefs, was like the
 stately Crothar? Warriors kindled in his
 presence. The young sigh of the virgins
 rose. In Alnecma (2) was the warrior honour-
 ed; the first of the race of Bolga.

between their posterity, and was the foundation of
 the story of the poem.

(1) From this circumstance we may learn that
 the art of building with stone was not known in
 Ireland so early as the days of Crothar. When the
 colony were long settled in the country, the arts of
 civil life began to increase among them; for we find
 mention made of the *towers of Atha* in the time of
 Cathmor, which could not well be applied to wooden
 buildings. In Caledonia they begun very early to
 build with stone. None of the houses of Fingal,
 excepting Ti-foirmal, were of wood. Ti-foirmal was
 the great hall where the bards met to repeat their
 compositions annually, before they submitted them
 to the judgment of the king in Selma. By some
 accident or other, this wooden house happened to
 be burnt, and an ancient bard, in the character
 of Ossian, has left us a curious catalogue of the
 furniture which it contained. The poem is not just
 now in my hands, otherwise I would lay here a
 translation of it before the reader. It has little poetical
 merit, and evidently bears the marks of a period
 much later than that wherein Fingal lived.

(2) Alnecma, or Alnecmacht, was the ancient

BOOK II. AN EPIC POEM. 73

He pursued the chace in Ullin : on the moss-covered top of Drumardo. From the wood looked the daughter of Cathmin, the blue-rolling eye of Con-lama. Her sigh rose in secret. She bent her head, midst her wandering locks. The moon looked in, at night, and saw the white-tossing of her arms; for she thought of the mighty Crothar, in the season of her dreams.

Three days feasted Crothar with Cathmin. On the fourth they awaked the hinds. Con-láma moved to the chace, with all her lovely steps. She met Crothar in the narrow path. The bow fell, at once, from her hand. She turned her face away, and half-hid it with her locks.—The love of Crothar rose. He brought the white-bosomed maid to Atha.—Bards raised the song in her presence; joy dwelt round the daughter of Ullin.

The pride of Turloch rose, a youth who loved the white-handed Con-lama. He came, with battle, to Alnecma; to Atha of the roes. Cormul went forth to the strife, the brother of car-borne Crothar. He went forth,

name of Connaught. Ullin is still the Irish name of the province of Ulster. To avoid the multiplying of notes, I shall here give the signification of the names in this episode. Drumardo, *high-ridge*. Cathmin, *calm in battle*. Cón-lamha, *soft hand*. Turloch, *man of the quiver*. Cormul, *blue eye*.

but he fell, and the sigh of his people rose.
—Silent and tall, across the stream, came
the darkening strength of Crothar: he rolled
the foe from Alnecma, and returned, midst
the joy of Con-lama.

Battle on battle comes. Blood is poured
on blood. The tombs of the valiant rise.
Erin's clouds are hung round with ghosts.
The chiefs of the south gathered round the
echoing shield of Crothar. He came, with
death, to the paths of the foe. The virgins
wept, by the streams of Ullin. They looked
to the mist of the hill, no hunter descended
from its folds. Silence darkened in the land:
blasts sighed lonely on grassy tombs.

Descending like the eagle of heaven, with
all his rustling wings, when he forsakes the
blast with joy, the son of Trenmor came;
Conar, arm of death, from Morven of the
groves.—He poured his might along green
Erin. Death dimly strode behind his sword.
The sons of Bolga fled, from his course,
as from a stream, that bursting from the
stormy defart, rolls the fields together, with
all their echoing woods.—Crothar (1) met

(1) The delicacy of the bard, with regard to
Crothar, is remarkable. As he was the ancestor of
Cathmor, to whom the episode is addressed,
the bard softens his defeat, by only mentioning that

BOOK II. AN EPIC POEM. 35

him in battle: but Alnecma's warriors fled. The king of Atha slowly retired, in the grief of his soul. He, afterwards, shone in the south; but dim as the sun of Autumn; when he visits, in his robes of mist, Lara of dark streams. The withered grass is covered with dew: the field, tho' bright, is sad.

Why wakes the bard before me, said Cathmor, the memory of those who fled? Has some ghost, from his dusky cloud, bent forward to thine ear, to frighten Cathmor from the field with the tales of old? Dwellers of the folds of night, your voice is but a blast to me; which takes the grey thistle's head, and strews its beard on streams. Within my bosom is a voice; others hear it not. His soul forbids the king of Erin to shrink back from war.

his people fled.—Cathmor took the song of Fonar in an unfavourable light. The bards, being of the order of the Druids, who pretended to a foreknowledge of events, were supposed to have some supernatural prescience of futurity. The king thought, that the choice of Fonar's song proceeded, from his foreseeing the unfortunate issue of the war; and that his own fate was shadowed out, in that of his ancestor Crothar. The attitude of the bard, after the reprimand of his patron, is picturesque and affecting. We admire the speech of Cathmor, but lament the effect it has on the feeling soul of the good old poet.

Abashed the bard sinks back in night :
retired, he bends above a stream. His thoughts
are on the days of Atha, when Cathmor
heard his song with joy. His tears come
rolling down : the winds are in his beard.

Erin sleeps around. No sleep comes down
on Cathmor's eyes. Dark, in his soul, he
saw the spirit of low-laid Cairbar. He saw
him, without his song, rolled in a blast
of night.—He rose. His steps were round
the host. He struck, at times, his echoing
shield. The sound reached Ossian's ear, on
Mora of the hinds.

Fillan, I said, the foes advance. I hear
the shield of war. Stand thou in the narrow
path. Ossian shall mark their course. If over
my fall the host shall pour ; then be thy
buckler heard. Awake the king on his heath,
lest his fame should cease.

I strode, in all my rattling arms ; wide-
bounding over a stream that darkly-winded,
in the field, before the king of Atha. Green
Atha's king, with lifted spear, came forward
on my course.—Now would we have mixed
in horrid fray, like two contending ghosts,
that bending forward, from two clouds,
send forth the roaring winds ; did not Ossian
behold, on high, the helmet of Erin's kings.
The Eagle's wing spread above it, rustling

BOOK II. AN EPIC POEM. 57

in the breeze. A red star looked thro' the plumes. I stopt the lifted spear.

The helmet of kings is before me ! Who art thou, son of night ? Shall Ossian's spear be renowned, when thou art lowly-laid ? — At once he dropt the gleaming lance. Growing before me seemed the form. He stretched his hand in night ; and spoke the words of kings.

Friend of the spirit of heroes, do I meet thee thus in shades ? I have wished for thy stately steps in Atha, in the days of feasts. — Why should my spear now arise ? The sun must behold us, Ossian ; when we bend, gleaming, in the strife. Future warriors shall mark the place : and, shuddering, think of other years. They shall mark it, like the haunt of ghosts, pleasant and dreadful to the soul.

And shall it be forgot, I said, where we meet in peace ? Is the remembrance of battles always pleasant to the soul ? Do not we behold, with joy, the place where our fathers feasted ? But our eyes are full of tears, on the field of their wars. — This stone shall rise, with all its moss, and speak to other years. « Here Cathmor and Ossian met ! the warriors met in peace ! » — When thou, O stone, shalt fail : and Lubar's stream roll quite

away! then shall the traveller come, and bend here, perhaps, in rest. When the darkened moon is rolled over his head, our shadowy forms may come, and, mixing with his dreams, remind him of this place. But why turnest thou so dark away, son of Borbar-duthul (1)?

Not forgot, son of Fingal, shall we ascend these winds. Our deeds are streams of light, before the eyes of bards. But darkness is rolled on Atha: the king is low, without his song: still there was a beam towards Cathmor from his stormy soul; like the moon, in a cloud, amidst the dark-red course of thunder.

Son of Erin, I replied, my wrath dwells not in his house (2). My hatred flies, on

(1) Borbar-duthul, *the surly warrior of the dark-brown eyes*. That his name suited well with his character, we may easily conceive, from the story delivered concerning him, by Malthos, toward the end of the sixth book. He was the brother of that Colculla, who is mentioned in the episode which begins the fourth book.

(2) The grave, often poetically called a house. This reply of Ossian abounds with the most exalted sentiments of a noble mind. Tho', of all men living, he was the most injured by Cairbar, yet he lays aside his rage as the *foe was low*. How different is this from the behaviour of the heroes of other ancient poems! — *Cynthia aurem vellis*.

BOOK II. AN EPIC POEM. 59

eagle-wing, from the foe that is low. —
He shall hear the song of bards; Cairbar
shall rejoice on his wind.

Cathmor's swelling soul arose: he took the
dagger from his side; and placed it gleaming
in my hand. He placed it, in my hand,
with sighs, and, silent, strode away. — Mine
eyes followed his departure. He dimly
gleamed, like the form of a ghost, which
meets a traveller, by night, on the dark-skirted
heath. His words are dark like songs of
old: with morning strides the unfinished
shade away.

(1) Who comes from Lubar's vale? From

(1) The morning of the second day, from the
opening of the poem, comes on. — After the death
of Cuchullin, Carril, the son of Kinfena, his bard,
retired to the cave of Tura, which was in the
neighbourhood of Moilena, the scene of the poem
of Temora. His casual appearance here enables Ossian
to fulfil immediately the promise he had made to
Cathmor, of causing the *funeral song* to be pronounced
over the tomb of Cairbar. — The whole of this
passage, together with the address of Carril to the
sun, is a lyric measure, and was, undoubtedly,
intended as a relief to the mind, after the long
narrative which preceded it. Tho' the lyric pieces,
scattered through the poems of Ossian, are certainly
very beautiful in the original, yet they must appear
much to disadvantage, stripped of numbers, and
the harmony of rhyme. In the recitative or narrative
part of the poem, the original is rather a measured

the folds of the morning mist? The drops of heaven are on his head. His steps are in the paths of the sad. It is Carril of other times. He comes from Tura's silent cave. I behold it dark in the rock, thro' the thin folds of mist. There, perhaps, Cuchullin sits, on the blast which bends its trees. Pleasant is the song of the morning from the bard of Erin!

The waves crowd away for fear : they hear the sound of thy coming forth, O sun!—Terrible is thy beauty, son of heaven, when death is folded in thy locks; when thou rollest thy vapors before thee, over the blasted host. But pleasant is thy beam to the hunter, sitting by the rock in a storm, when thou lookest from thy parted cloud, and brightenest his dewy locks; he looks down on the streamy vale, and behold the descent of roes.—How long shalt thou rise on war, and roll, a bloody shield, thro' heaven? I see the deaths of heroes dark-wandering over thy face!—Why wander the words of Carril! does the son of heaven mourn! he is unstained in his course, ever rejoicing in his fire.—Roll on, thou careless light; thou too, perhaps, must fall. Thy dun

sort of prose, than any regular versification; but it has all that variety of cadences, which suit the different ideas, and passions of the speakers.—This book takes up only the space of a few hours.

BOOK II. AN EPIC POEM. 71

robe (1) may seize thee, struggling, in thy sky.

Pleasant is the voice of the song, O Carril, to Ossian's soul! It is like the shower of the morning, when it comes through the rustling vale, on which the sun looks thro' mist, just rising from his rocks.—But this is no time, O bard, to sit down, at the strife of song. Fingal is in arms on the vale. Thou seest the flaming shield of the king. His face darkens between his locks. He beholds the wide rolling of Erin.—

Does not Carril behold that tomb, beside the roaring stream? Three stones lift their grey heads, beneath a bending oak. A king is lowly-laid: give thou his soul to the wind. He is the brother of Cathmor! open his airy hall.—Let thy song be a stream of joy to Cairbar's darkened ghost.

(1) By the *dun robe* of the sun, is probably meant an eclipse.

ns

TEMORA:

AN

EPIC POEM.

BOOK THIRD.

ns
®

THE MORA

AN

EPIC POEM

BOOK THREE

(H)

ARGUMENT to BOOK III.

Morning coming on, Fingal, after a speech to his people, devolves the command on Gaul, the son of Morni; it being the custom of the times, that the king should not engage, till the necessity of affairs required his superior valour and conduct. — The king and Ossian retire to the rock of Cormul, which overlooked the field of battle. The bards sing the war-song. The general conflict is described. Gaul the son of Morni, distinguishes himself; kills Turlathon, chief of Moruth, and other chiefs of lesser name. — On the other hand, Foldath, who commanded the Irish army (for Cathmor, after the example of Fingal, kept himself from battle) fights gallantly; kills Connal, chief of Dun-lora, and advances to engage Gaul himself. Gaul, in the mean time, being wounded in the hand, by a random arrow, is covered by Fillan, the son of Fingal, who performs prodigies of valour. Night comes on. The horn of Fingal recalls his army. The bards meet them, with a congratulatory song, in which the praises of Gaul and Fillan are particularly celebrated. The chiefs sit down at a feast; Fingal misses Connal. The episode of Connal and Duthcaron is introduced; which

66 ARGUMENT to BOOK III.

throws further light on the ancient history of Ireland. Carril is dispatched to raise the tomb of Connal. — The action of this book takes up the second day, from the opening of the poem.

TEMORA:

AN

EPIC POEM.

BOOK THIRD.

(1) **W**HO is that, at blue-streaming Lubar; by the bending hill of the roes? Tall, he leans on an oak torn from high, by nightly winds.—Who but Comhal's son, brightening

(1) This sudden apostrophe, concerning Fingal, the attitude of the king, and the scenery in which he is placed, tend to elevate the mind to a just conception of the succeeding battle. The speech of Fingal is full of that magnanimous generosity which distinguishes his character throughout. The groupe of figures, which the poet places around his father, are picturesque, and described with great propriety. The silence of Gaul, the behaviour of Fillan, and the effect which both have on the mind of Fingal, are well imagined.—His speech upon the occasion is very beautiful in the original. Broken and unequal, the numbers represent the agitation of his mind, divided between the admiration excited by the silence of Gaul, (when others boasted of their own actions) and his natural affection for Fillan, which the behaviour of that valiant youth had raised to the highest pitch.

in the last of his fields? His grey hair is on the breeze: he half unsheaths the sword of Luno. His eyes are turned to Moilena, to the dark rolling of foes.—Dost thou hear the voice of the king? It is like the bursting of a stream, in the desert, when it comes between its echoing rocks, to the blasted field of the sun.

Wide-skirted comes down the foe! Sons of woody Morven, arise. Be ye like the rocks of my land, on whose brown sides are the rolling of waters. A beam of joy comes on my soul; I see them mighty before me. It is when the foe is feeble, that the sighs of Fingal are heard; lest death should come, without renown, and darkness dwell on his tomb.—Who shall lead the war, against the host of Alnecma? It is, only when danger grows, that my sword shall shine.—Such was the custom, heretofore, of Trenmor the ruler of winds: and thus descended to battle the blue-shielded Trathal.

The chiefs bend towards the king: each darkly seems to claim the war. They tell, by halves, their mighty deeds: and turn their eyes on Erin. But far before the rest the son of Morni stood: silent he stood, for who had not heard of the battles of Gaul? They rose within his soul. His hand, in secret, seized

BOOK III. AN EPIC POEM. 89

seized the sword. The sword which he brought from Strumon, when the strength of Morni failed (1).

(1) Strumon, *stream of the hill*, the name of the seat of the family of Gaul, in the neighbourhood of Selma. During Gaul's expedition to Tromathon, mentioned in the *poem of Oithona*, Morni his father died. Morni ordered the *sword of Strumon*, (which had been preserved, in the family, as a relique, from the days of Colgach, the most renowned of his ancestors) to be laid by his side, in the tomb: at the same time, leaving it in charge to his son, not to take it from thence, till he was reduced to the last extremity. Not long after, two of his brothers being slain, in battle, by Coldaronnan, chief of Clutha, Gaul went to his father's tomb to take the sword. His address to the spirit of the deceased hero, is the only part now remaining, of a poem of Ossian, on the subject. I shall here lay it before the reader.

GAUL.

« Breaker of echoing shields, whose head is deep in shades; hear me from the darkness of Clora, O son of Colgach, hear!

No rustling, like eagle's wing, comes over the course of my streams. Deep-bosomed in the mist of the desert, O king of Strumon, hear!

Dwellest thou in the shadowy breeze, that pours its dark wave over the grass? Cease to strew the beard of the thistle; O chief of Clora, hear!

70 T E M O R A : B O O K I I I .

On his spear stood the son of Clatho (1)
in the wandering of his locks. Thrice he

Or ridest thou on a beam, amidst the dark
trouble of clouds ? Pourest thou the loud wind on
seas, to roll their blue waves over isles ? hear me,
father of Gaul ; amidst thy terrors, hear !

The rustling of eagles is heard, the murmur-
ing oaks shake their heads on the hills : dreadful
and pleasant is thy approach, friend of the dwell-
ing of heroes.

M O R N I .

Who awakes me, in the midst of my cloud,
where my locks of mist spread on the winds ? Mixed
with the noise of streams, why rises the voice of
Gaul ?

G A U L .

My foes are around me, Morni : their dark ships
descend from their waves. Give the sword of Stru-
mon, that beam which thou hidest in thy night.

M O R N I .

Take the sword of resounding Strumon ; I look
on thy war, my son ; I look, a dim meteor,
from my cloud : blue-shielded Gaul, destroy ».

(1) Clatho was the daughter of Cathulla, king
of Inistore. Fingal, in one of his expeditions to

BOOK III. AN EPIC POEM. 71

raised his eyes to Fingal : his voice thrice failed him , as he spoke.—Fillan could not boast of battles ; at once he strode away. Bent over a distant stream he stood : the tear hung in his eye. He struck , at times , the thistle's head , with his inverted spear.

Nor is he unseen of Fingal. Sidelong he beheld his son. He beheld him , with bursting joy ; and turned , amidst his crowded soul. In silence turned the king towards Mora of woods. He hid the big tear with his locks.—At length his voice is heard.

(1) First of the sons of Morni ; thou

that island , fell in love with Clatho , and took her wife , after the death of Ros-crána , the daughter of Cormac , king of Ireland.

Clatho was the mother of Ryno , Fillan , and Bosmina , mentioned in the *battle of Lora* , one of the lesser poems printed in Vol. I. Fillan is often called the son of Clatho , to distinguish him from those sons which Fingal had by Ros-crana.

(1) Gaul , the son of Morni , next to Fingal , is the most renowned character introduced by Ossian in his poems. He is , like Ajax in the *Iliad* , distinguished , by his manly taciturnity. The honourable epithets bestowed on him here , by Fingal , are amazingly expressive in the original. There is not a passage in all *Temora* , which loses so much in the translation as this. The first part of the speech is rapid and irregular , and is peculiarly

F ij

rock that defiest the storm ! Lead thou my battle , for the race of low-laid Cormac. No boy's staff is thy spear : no harmless beam of light thy sword. Son of Morni of steeds, behold the foe ; destroy.—Fillan , observe the chief: he is not calm in strife ; nor burns he , heedless , in battle ; my son , observe the king. He is strong as Lubar's stream , but never foams and roars. High on cloudy Mora , Fingal shall behold the war. Stand , Ossian (1) , near thy father , by the falling stream.—Raise the voice , O bards ; Morven , move beneath the sound. It is my latter field ; clothe it over with light.

As the sudden rising of winds ; or distant rolling of troubled seas , when some dark ghost , in wrath , heaves the billows over an isle , the seat of mist , on the deep , for many dark-brown years : so terrible is the sound

calculated to animate the soul to war.—Where the king addresses Fillan , the versification changes to a regular and smooth measure. The first is like torrents rushing over broken rocks ; the second like the course of a full-flowing river , calm , but majestic. This instance serves to shew , how much is assists a poet to alter the measure , according to the particular passion , that he intends to excite in his reader.

(1) Ullin being sent to Morven with the body of Oscar , Ossian attends his father , in quality of chief bard.

BOOK III. AN EPIC POEM. 73

of the host, wide-moving over the field. Gaul is tall before them : the streams glitter within his strides. The bards raised the song by his side ; he struck his shield between. On the skirts of the blast, the tuneful voices rose.

On Crona, said the bards, there bursts a stream by night. It swells, in its own dark course, till morning's early beam. Then comes it white from the hill, with the rocks and their hundred groves. Far be my steps from Crona : Death is tumbling there. Be ye a stream from Mora, sons of cloudy Morven.

Who rises, from his car, on Clutha ? The hills are troubled before the king ! The dark woods echo round, and lighten at his steel. See him, amidst the foe, like Colgach's (1)

(1) There are some traditions, but, I believe, of late invention, that this Colgach was the same with the Galgacus of Tacitus. He was the ancestor of Gaul, the son of Morni, and appears, from some, really ancient, traditions, to have been king, or Vergobret, of the Caledonians ; and hence proceeded the pretensions of the family of Morni to the throne, which created a good deal of disturbance, both to Comhal and his son Fingal. The first was killed in battle by that tribe ; and it was after Fingal was grown up, that they were reduced to obedience. Colgach signifies *fiercely-looking* ; which is a very proper name for a warrior, and is probably the origin of Galgacus ; tho' I

sportful ghost; when he scatters the clouds,
and rides the eddying winds! It is Morni (1)
of the bounding steeds! Be like thy father,
Gaul!

(2) Selma is opened wide. Bards take the
trembling harps. Ten youths carry the oak
of the feast. A distant sun-beam marks the
hill. The dusky waves of the blast fly over
the fields of grass.—Why art thou so silent,
Morven?—The king returns with all his fame.
Did not the battle roar; yet peaceful is his
brow? It roared, and Fingal overcame.—
Be like thy father, Fillan!

believe it a matter of mere conjecture, that the
Colgach here mentioned was the same with that
hero.—I cannot help observing, with how much
propriety the song of the bards is conducted. Gaul,
whose experience might have rendered his conduct
cautious in war, has the example of his father,
just rushing to battle, set before his eyes. Fillan,
on the other hand, whose youth might make him
impetuous, and unguarded in action, is put in
mind of the sedate and serene behaviour of Fin-
gal upon like occasions.

(1) The expedition of Morni to Clutha, alluded
to here, is handed down in tradition. The poem,
on which the tradition was founded, is now lost.

(2) Ossian is peculiarly happy, in his descriptions
of still life; and these acquire double force, by
his placing them near busy and tumultuous scenes.
This antithesis serves to animate and heighten the
features of poetry.

They moved beneath the song.—High waved their arms, as rushy fields, beneath autumnal winds. On Mora stood the king in arms. Mist flies round his buckler broad; as, aloft, it hung on a bough, on Cormul's mossy rock.—In silence I stood by Fingal, and turned my eyes on Cromla's (1) wood: lest I should behold the host, and rush amidst my swelling foul. My foot is forward on the heath. I glittered, tall, in steel: like the falling stream of Tromo, which nightly winds bind over with ice.—The boy sees it, on high, gleaming to the early beam: towards it he turns his ear, and wonders why it is so silent.

Nor bent over a stream is Cathmor, like a youth in a peaceful field: wide he drew forward the war, a dark and troubled wave.—But when he beheld Fingal on Mora; his generous pride arose. « Shall the chief of « Atha fight, and no king in the field? « Foldath lead my people forth. Thou art « a beam of fire ».

Forth-issued the chief of Moma, like a cloud, the robe of ghosts. He drew his sword, a flame, from his side; and bade the battle

(1) The mountain Cromla was in the neighbourhood of the scene of this poem; which was nearly the same with that of Fingal.

move.—The tribes, like ridgy waves, dark
pour their strength around. Haughty is his
stride before them: his red eye rolls in wrath.
—He called the chief of Dunratho (1); and
his words were heard.

Cormul, thou beholdest that path. It winds
green behind the foe. Place thy people
there; lest Morven should escape from my
sword.—Bards of green-valleyed Erin, let
no voice of yours arise. The sons of Morven
must fall without song. They are the foes
of Cairbar. Hereafter shall the traveller meet
their dark, thick mist on Lena, where it
wanders, with their ghosts, beside the reedy
lake. Never shall they rise, without song,
to the dwelling of winds.

Cormul darkened, as he went: behind
him rushed his tribe. They sunk beyond the
rock: Gaul spoke to Fillan of Moruth;

(1) Dun-ratho, *a hill, with a plain on its top.*
Corm-uil, *blue eye.* Foldath dispatches, here,
Cormul to lie in ambush behind the army of the
Caledonians. This speech suits well with the cha-
racter of Foldath, which is, throughout, haughty
and presumptuous. Towards the latter end of this
speech, we find the opinion of the times, concern-
ing the unhappiness of the souls of those who were
buried without the funeral song. This doctrine, no
doubt, was inculcated by the bards, to make their
order respectable, and necessary.

BOOK III. AN EPIC POEM. 77

as his eye pursued the course of the dark-eyed king of Dunratho.

Thou beholdest the steps of Cormul; let thine arm be strong. When he is low, son of Fingal, remember Gaul in war. Here I fall forward into battle, amidst the ridge of shields.

The sign of death arose: the dreadful sound of Morni's shield. Gaul poured his voice between. Fingal rose, high on Mora. He saw them, from wing to wing, bending in the strife. Gleaming, on his own dark hill, the strength (1) of Atha stood.—They (2) were like two spirits of heaven, standing each on his gloomy cloud; when they pour abroad the winds, and lift the roaring seas. The blue-tumbling of waves is before them, marked with the paths of whales. Themselves are calm and bright; and the gale lifts their locks of mist.

What beam of light hangs high in air? It is Morni's dreadful sword.—Death is strewed on thy paths, O Gaul; thou foldest them toge-

(1) By the *strenght of Atha*, is meant Cathmor. The expression is common in Homer, and other ancient poets.

(2) The two kings.

ther in thy rage.—Like a young oak falls Turlathon (1), with his branches round him His high-bosomed spouse stretches her white arms, in dreams, to the returning king, as she sleeps by gurgling Moruth, in her disordered locks. It is his ghost, Oichoma; the chief is lowly laid. Harken not to the winds for Turlathon's echoing shield. It is pierced, by his streams, and its sound is past away.

Not peaceful is the hand of Foldath: he winds his course in blood. Connal met him in fight; they mixed their clanging steel.—Why should mine eyes behold them! Connal, thy locks are grey.—Thou wert the friend of strangers, at the moss-covered rock of Dunlora. When the skies were rolled together; then thy feast was spread. The stranger heard the winds without; and rejoiced at thy burning oak.—Why, son of Duth-caron, art thou laid in blood! The blasted tree bends above thee: thy shield lies broken near. Thy blood mixes with the stream; thou breaker of the shields!

(1) I took the spear, in my wrath; but

(1) Tur-lathon, *broad trunk of a tree*. Móruth, *great stream*. Oichaoma, *mild maid*. Dun-lora, *the hill of the noisy stream*. Duth-caron, *dark-brown man*.

(2) The poet speaks in his own person.

Gaul rushed forward on the foe. The feeble pass by his side; his rage is turned on Moma's chief. Now they had raised their deathful spears: unseen an arrow came. It pierced the hand of Gaul; his steel fell sounding to earth.—Young Fillan came (1), with Cormul's shield, and stretched it large before the king. Foldath sent his shout abroad, and kindled all the field: as a blast that lifts the broad-winged flame, over Lumon's (2) echoing groves.

Son of blue-eyed Clatho, said Gaul, thou art a beam from heaven; that coming on the troubled deep, blinds up the tempest's wing.—Cormul is fallen before thee. Early art thou in the fame of thy fathers.—Rush not too far, my hero, I cannot lift the spear to aid. I stand harmless in battle: but my voice shall be poured abroad.—The sons of Morven

(1) Fillan had been dispatched by Gaul to oppose Cormul, who had been sent by Foldath to lie in ambush behind the Caledonian army. It appears that Fillan had killed Cormul; otherwise he could not be supposed to have possessed himself of the shield of that chief. The poet being intent upon the main action, passes over slightly this feat of Fillan.

(2) Lumon, *bending hill*; a mountain in Inishuna, or that part of South-Britain which is over-against the Irish coast.

shall hear, and remember my former deeds.

His terrible voice rose on the wind, the host bend forward in the fight. Often had they heard him, at Strumon, when he called them to the chace of the hinds.—Himself stood tall, amidst the war, as an oak in the skirts of a storm, which now is clothed, on high, in mist: then shews its broad, waving head; the musing hunter lifts his eye from his own rushy field.

My soul pursues thee, O Fillan, thro' the path of thy fame. Thou rolledst the foe before thee.—Now Foldath, perhaps, would fly; but night came down with its clouds; and Cathmor's horn was heard. The sons of Morven heard the voice of Fingal, from Mora's gathered mist. The bards poured their song, like dew, on the returning war.

Who comes from Strumon, they said, amidst her wandering locks? She is mournful in her steps, and lifts her blue eyes towards Erin. Why art thou sad, Evir-choma (1)? Who is like thy chief in renown? He descended dreadful to battle; he returns, like a light from a cloud. He lifted the sword in

(1) Evir-choama, *mild and stately maid*, the wife of Gaul. She was the daughter of Casdu-conglas, chief of I-dronlo, one of the Hebrides.

BOOK III. AN EPIC POEM. 81

wrath : they shrunk before blue-shielded
Gaul!

Joy, like the rustling gale, comes on the
soul of the king. He remembers the battles
of old; the days, wherein his fathers fought.
The days of old return on Fingal's mind,
as he beholds the renown of his son. As the
sun rejoices, from his cloud, over the tree his
beams have raised, as it shakes its lonely head
on the heath; so joyful is the king over Fillan.

As the rolling of thunder on hills, when
Lara's fields are still and dark, such are the
steps of Morven pleasant and dreadful to the
ear. They return with their sound, like
eagles to their dark-browed rock, after the
prey is torn on the field, the dun sons of the
bounding hind. Your fathers rejoice from
their clouds, sons of streamy Cona.

Such was the nightly voice of bards, on
Mora of the hinds. A flame rose, from an
hundred oaks, which winds had torn from
Cormul's steep. The feast is spread in the
midst: around sat the gleaming chiefs. Fingal
is there in his strength; the eagle-wing (1)

(1) From this, and several other passages, in
this poem, it appears, that the kings of Morven
and Ireland had a plume of eagle's feathers, by
way of ornament, in their helmets. It was from
this distinguished mark that Ossian knew Cathmor.

of his helmet sounds : the rustling blasts of the west, unequal rushed thro' night. Long looked the king in silence round : at length, his words were heard.

My soul feels a want in our joy. I behold a breach among my friends.—The head of one tree is low : the squally wind pours in on Selma.—Where is the chief of Dun-lora? Ought he to be forgot at the feast? When did he forget the stranger, in the midst of his echoing hall?—Ye are silent in my presence! — Connal is then no more. — Joy meet thee, O warrior, like a stream of light. Swift be thy course to thy fathers, in the folds of the mountain-winds. — Ossian, thy soul is fire : kindle the memory of the king. Awake the battles of Connal, when first he shone in war. The locks of Connal were grey; his days of youth (1)

in the second book ; which custom , probably , he had borrowed , from the former monarchs of Ireland , of the race of the Caël or Caledonians.

(1) After the death of Comhal , and during the usurpation of the tribe of Morni , Fingal was educated in private by Duth-caron. It was then he contracted that intimacy , with Connal the son of Duth-caron , which occasions his regretting so much his fall. When Fingal was grown up , he soon reduced the tribe of Morni ; and , as it appears from the subsequent episode , sent Duth-caron and his son Connal to the aid of Cormac , the son of

were mixed with mine. In one day Duth-caron first strung our bows, against the roes of Dun-lora.

Many, I said, are our paths to battle, in green-hilled Inisfail. Often did our sails arise, over the blue-tumbling waters; when we came, in other days, to aid the race of Conar.

The strife roared once in Alnecma, at the foam-covered streams of Duth-ula (1). With Cormac descended to battle Duth-caron from cloudy Morven. Nor descended Duth-caron alone, his son was by his side, the long-haired youth of Connal, lifting the first of his spears. Thou didst command them, O Fingal, to aid the king of Erin.

Like the bursting strength of a stream, the sons of Bolga^a rushed to war: Colc-ulla (2)

Conar, king of Ireland, who was driven to the last extremity, by the insurrections of the Firbolg. This episode throws farther light on the contests between the Caél and Firbolg; and is the more valuable upon that account.

(1) Duth-úla, a river in Connaught; it signifies, *dark-rushing water*.

(2) Col-culla, *firm look in readiness*; he was the brother of Borbar-duthul, the father of Cairbar

was before them, the chief of blue-streaming Atha. The battle was mixed on the plain, like the meeting of two stormy seas. Cormac (1) shone in his own strife, bright as the forms of his fathers. But, far before the rest, Duth-caron hewed down the foe. Nor slept the arm of Connal, by his father's side.

and Cathmor, who after the death of Cormac, the son of Artho, successively mounted the Irish throne.

(1) Cormac, the son of Conar, the second king of Ireland, of the race of the Caledonians. This insurrection of the Firbolg happened towards the latter end of the long reign of Cormac. From several episodes and poems, it appears, that he never possessed the Irish throne peaceably. — The party of the family of Atha had made several attempts to overturn the succession in the race of Conar, before they effected it, in the minority of Cormac, the son of Artho. — Ireland, from the most ancient accounts concerning it, seems to have been always so disturbed by domestic commotions, that it is difficult to say, whether it ever was, for any length of time, subject to one monarch. It is certain, that every province, if not every small district, had its own king. One of these petty princes assumed, at times, the title of king of Ireland, and, on account of his superior force, or in cases of publick danger, was acknowledged by the rest as such; but the succession, from father to son, does not appear to have been established. — It was the divisions amongst themselves, arising from the bad constitution of their government, that, at last, subjected the Irish to a foreign yoke.

BOOK III. AN EPIC POEM. 87

Atha prevailed on the plain : like scattered mist, fled the people of Ullin (1).

Then rose the sword of Duth-caron; and the steel of broad-shielded Connal. They shaded their flying friends, like two rocks with their heads of pine.—Night came down on Duth-ula : silent strode the chiefs over the field. A mountain-stream roared across the path, nor could Duth-caron bound over its course.—Why stands my father? said Connal.—I hear the rushing foe.

Fly, Connal, he said; thy father's strength begins to fail.—I come wounded from battle; here let me rest in night.—«But thou shalt not remain alone, said Connal's bursting sigh. My shield is an eagle's wing to cover the king of Dun-lora». He bends dark above the chief : the mighty Duth-caron dies.

Day rose, and night returned. No lonely bard appeared, deep-musing on the heath; and could Connal leave the tomb of his father, till he should receive his fame?—He

(1) The inhabitants of Ullin or Ulster, who were of the race of the Caledonians, seem, alone, to have been the firm friends to the succession in the family of Conar. The Firbolg were only subject to them by constraint, and embraced every opportunity to throw off their yoke.

bent the bow against the roes of Duth-ula; he spread the lonely feast.—Seven nights he laid his head on the tomb, and saw his father in his dreams. He saw him rolled dark, in a blast, like the vapor of reedy Lego.—At length the steps of Colgan (1) came, the bard of

(1) Colgan, the son of Cathmul, was the principal bard of Cormac Mac-Conar, king of Ireland. Part of an old poem, on the loves of Fingal and Ros-crána, is still preserved, and goes under the name of this Colgan; but whether it is of his composition, or the production of a latter age, I shall not pretend to determine. Be that as it will, it appears, from the obsolescent phrases which it contains, to be very ancient; and its poetical merit may perhaps excuse me, for laying a translation of it before the reader. What remains of the poem is a dialogue in a lyric measure, between Fingal and Ros-crána, the daughter of Cormac. She begins with a soliloquy, which is overheard by Fingal.

ROS-CRANA.

By night, came a dream to Ros-crána! I feel my beating soul. No vision of the forms of the dead, came to the blue eyes of Erin. But, rising from the wave of the north, I beheld him bright in his locks. I beheld the son of the king. My beating soul is high. I laid my head down in night; again ascended the form. Why delayest thou thy coming, young rider of streamy waves!

But, there, far-distant, he comes; where seas

BOOK III. AN EPIC POEM. 87

high Temora. Duth-caron received his fame,
and brightened, as he rose on the wind.

roll their green ridges in mist ! Young dweller of
my soul ; why dost thou delay——

F I N G A L.

It was the soft voice of Moi-lena ! the pleasant
breeze of the valley of roes ! But why dost thou
hide thee in shades ? Young love of heroes , rise.

——Are not thy steps covered with light ? In thy
groves thou appearest , Ros-crána , like the sun in
the gathering of clouds. Why dost thou hide thee
in shades ? Young love of heroes , rise.

R O S - C R A N A.

My fluttering soul is high !——Let me turn from
the steps of the king. He has heard my secret voice ,
and shall my blue eyes roll , in his presence ?——
Roe of the hill of moss , toward thy dwelling I
move. Meet me , ye breezes of Mora , as I move
thro' the valley of winds.——But why should he
ascend his ocean ? —— Son of heroes , my soul
is thine ! —— My steps shall not move to the de-
sart : the light of Ros-crána is here.

F I N G A L.

It was the light tread of a ghost , the fair dweller

Pleasant to the ear, said Fingal, is the praise of the kings of men; when their bows are strong in battle; when they soften at the sight of the sad. — Thus let my name be renowned, when bards shall lighten my rising soul. Carril, son of Kinfena; take the

of eddying winds. Why deceivest thou me, with thy voice? Here let me rest in shades. — Shouldst thou stretch thy white arm, from thy grove, thou sun-beam of Cormac of Erin!

ROS - CRANA.

He is gone! and my blue eyes are dim; faint-rolling, in all my tears. But, there, I behold him, alone; king of Morven, my soul is thine. Ah me! what clanging of armour! — Colc-ulla of Atha is near! —

Fingal, as we learn from the episode, with which the fourth book begins, undertook an expedition into Ireland, to aid Cormac Mac-conar against the insurrections of the Fir-bolg. It was then he saw, fell in love with, and married Ros-crána, the daughter of Cormac. — Some traditions give this poem to Ossian; but from several circumstances, I conclude it to be an imitation, but a very happy one of the manner of that poet. — The elegance of the sentiment, and beauty of the imagery, however, refer the composition of it to an æra of remote antiquity; for the nearer we approach to our own times, the less beautiful are the compositions of the bards.

bards and raise a tomb. To-night let Connal dwell within his narrow house : let not the soul of the valiant wander on the winds. Faint glimmers the moon on Moi-lena, thro' the broad-headed groves of the hill : raise stones, beneath its beams, to all the fallen in war.—Tho' no chiefs were they, yet their hands were strong in fight. They were my rock in danger : the mountain from which I spread my eagle-wings.—Thence am I renowned : Carril forget not the low.

Loud, at once, from the hundred bards, rose the song of the tomb. Carril strode before them, they are the murmur of streams behind him. Silence dwells in the vales of Moi-lena, where each, with its own dark stream, is winding between the hills. I heard the voice of the bards, lessening, as they moved along. I leaned forward from my shield ; and felt the kindling of my soul. Half-formed the words of my song, burst forth upon the wind. So hears a tree, on the vale, the voice of spring around : it pours its green leaves to the sun, and shakes its lonely head. The hum of the mountain bee is near it ; the hunter sees it, with joy, from the blasted heath.

Young Fillan, at a distance stood. His helmet lay glittering on the ground. His dark hair is loose to the blast : a beam of light

is Clatho's son. He heard the words of the king, with joy; and leaned forward on his spear.

My son, said car-borne Fingal, I saw thy deeds, and my soul was glad. The fame of our fathers, I said, bursts from its gathered cloud.—Thou art brave, son of Clatho; but headlong in the strife. So did not Fingal advance, tho' he never feared a foe.—Let thy people be a ridge behind; they are thy strength in the field.—Then shalt thou be long renowned, and behold the tombs of thy fathers. The memory of the past returns, my deeds in other years: when first I descended from ocean on the green-valleyed isle.—We bend towards the voice of the king. The moon looks abroad from her cloud. The grey-skirted mist is near, the dwelling of the ghosts.

TEMORA:

AN

EPIC POEM.

BOOK FOURTH.

ARGUMENT to BOOK IV.

The second night continues. Fingal relates , at the feast , his own first expedition into Ireland , and his marriage with Ros-crána , the daughter of Cormac , king of that island.—The Irish chiefs convene in the presence of Cathmor. The situation of the king described. The story of Sul-malla , the daughter of Conmor , king of Inishuna , who in the disguise of a young warrior , had followed Cathmor to the war. The sullen behaviour of Foldath , who had commanded in the battle of the preceding day , renews the difference between him and Malthos ; but Cathmor , interposing , ends it. The chiefs feast , and hear the song of Fonar the bard. Cathmor returns to rest , at a distance from the army. The ghost of his brother Cairbar appears to him in a dream ; and obscurely foretels the issue of the war.—The soliloquy of the king. He discovers Sul-malla. Morning comes. Her soliloquy closes the book.

TEMORA:

T E M O R A :

A N

E P I C P O E M.

BOOK FOURTH.

(1) **BENEATH** an oak, said the king, I sat
on Selma's streamy rock, when Connal rose,
from the sea, with the broken spear of
Duth-caron. Far-distant stood the youth, and
turned away his eyes; for he remembered the
steps of his father, on his own green hills.
I darkened in my place: dusky thoughts
rolled over my soul. The kings of Erin rose
before me. I half-unsheated my sword. —
Slowly approached the chiefs; they lifted
up their silent eyes. Like a ridge of clouds,
they wait for the bursting forth of my voice:

(1) This episode has an immediate connection with the story of Connal and Duth-caron, in the latter end of the third book. Fingal, sitting beneath an oak, near the palace of Selma, discovers Connal just landing from Ireland. The danger which threatened Cormac king of Ireland induces him to sail immediately to that island. — The story is introduced, by the king, as a pattern for the future behaviour of Fillan, whose rashness in the preceding battle is reprimanded.

VOL. III.

G

it was to them, a wind from heaven to roll the mist away.

I bade my white sails to rise, before the roar of Cona's wind. Three hundred youths looked, from their waves, on Fingal's bossy shield. High on the mast it hung, and marked the dark-blue sea.—But when the night came down, I struck, at times, the warning bos: I struck, and looked on high, for fiery-haired Ul-erin (1).

Nor wanting was the star of heaven: it travelled red between the clouds: I pursued the lovely beam, on the faint-gleaming deep.—With morning, Erin rose in mist. We came into the bay of Moi-lena, where its blue waters tumbled, in the bosom of echoing woods.—Here Cormac, in his secret hall, avoided the strength of Colc-ulla. Nor he alone avoids the foe: the blue eye of Ros-crana is there: Ros-crana (2), white-handed maid, the daughter of the king.

(1) Ul-erin, *the guide to Ireland*, a star known by that name in the days of Fingal, and very useful to those who sailed, by night, from the Hebrides, or Caledonia, to the coast of Ulster. We find, from this passage, that navigation was considerably advanced, at this time, among the Caledonians.

(2) Ros-crana, *the beam of the rising sun*; she was the mother of Ossian. The Irish bards relate

Grey, on his pointless spear, came forth
 the aged steps of Cormac. He smiled, from
 his waving locks, but grief was in his soul.
 He saw us few before him, and his sigh arose.
 —I see the arms of Trenmor, he said, and
 these are the steps of the king! Fingal! thou
 art a beam of light to Cormac's darkened
 soul.—Early is thy fame, my son: but strong
 are the foes of Erin. They are like the roar
 of streams in the land, son of car-borne
 Comhal.

Yet they may be rolled (1) away, I said
 in my rising soul. We are not of the race of
 the feeble, king of blue-shielded hosts. Why
 should fear come amongst us, like a ghost
 of night? The soul of the valiant grows, as
 foes increase in the field. Roll no darkness,
 king of Erin, on the young in war.

strange fictions concerning this princess. The character given of her here, and in other poems of Ossian, does not tally with their accounts. Their stories, however, concerning Fingal, if they mean him by *Fion Mac-Comhal*, are so inconsistent and notoriously fabulous, that they do not deserve to be mentioned; for they evidently bear, along with them, the marks of late invention.

(1) Cormac had said that his foes were *like the roar of streams*, and Fingal continues the metaphor. The speech of the young hero is spirited, and consistent with that sedate intrepidity, which eminently distinguishes his character throughout.

The bursting tears of the king came down. He seized my hand in silence.—« Race of the daring Trenmor, I roll no cloud before thee. Thou burnest in the fire of thy fathers. I behold thy fame. It marks thy course in battles, like a stream of light.—But wait the coming of Cairbar (1): my son must join thy sword. He calls the sons of Ullin, from all their distant streams».

We came to the hall of the king, where it rose in the midst of rocks: rocks, on whose dark sides, were the marks of streams of old. Broad oaks bend around with their moss: the thick birch waves its green head. Half-hid, in her shady grove, Ros-crana raised the song. Her white hands rose on the harp. I beheld her blue-rolling eyes. She was like a spirit (2) of heaven half-folded in the skirt of a cloud.

(1) Cairbar, the son of Cormac, was afterwards king of Ireland. His reign was short. He was succeeded by his son Artho, the father of that Cormac who was murdered by Cairbar the son of Borbar-duthul.—Cairbar, the son of Cormac, long after his son Artho was grown to man's estate, had, by his wife Beltanno, another son, whose name was Ferad-artho.—He was the only one remaining of the race of Conar, the first king of Ireland, when Fingal's expedition against Cairbar the son of Borbar-duthul happened. See more of Ferad-artho in the eighth book.

(2) The attitude of Ros-crana is aptly illustrated

Three days we feasted at Moi-lena : she
rose bright amidst my troubled soul.—Cor-

by this simile ; for the ideas of those times , concerning the spirits of the deceased , were not so gloomy and disagreeable as those of succeeding ages. The spirits of women , it was supposed , retained that beauty , which they possessed while living , and transported themselves , from place to place , with that gliding motion , which Homer ascribes to the gods. The descriptions which poets , less antient than Ossian , have left us of those beautiful figures , that appeared sometimes on the hills , are elegant and picturesque. They compare them to the *rain-bow on streams* : or , the *gliding of sun-beams on the hills*. I shall here translate a passage of an old song , where both these beautiful images are mentioned together.

A chief who lived three centuries ago , returning from the war , understood that his wife or mistress was dead. The bard introduces him speaking the following soliloquy , when he came within sight of the place , where he had left her , at his departure.

« My soul darkens in sorrow. I behold not the
smoak of my hall. No grey dog bounds at my
streams. Silence dwells in the valley of trees.

« Is that a rain-bow on Crunath ? It flies : —
and the sky is dark. Again , thou movest , bright ,
on the heath , thou sun-beam cloathed in a shower !
—Hah ! it is she , my love : her gliding course
on the bosom of winds !

In succeeding times the beauty of Ros-crana passed
G iij

mac beheld me dark. He gave the white-bosomed maid. — She came with bending eye, amidst the wandering of her heavy locks. — She came. — Straight the battle roared. — Colc-ulla rushed ; — I seized my spear. My sword rose, with my people, against the ridgy foe. Alnecma fled. Colc-ulla fell. Fingal returned with fame.

He is renowned, O Fillan, who fights, in the strength of his people. The bard pursues his steps, thro' the land of the foe. — But he who fights alone; few are his deeds to other times. He shines, to-day, a mighty light. To-morrow, he is low. One song contains his fame. His name is on one dark field. He is forgot, but where his tomb sends forth the tufts of grass.

Such were the words of Fingal, on Mora of the roes. Three bards, from the rock of Cormul, poured down the pleasant song. Sleep descended, in the sound, on the broad-skirted host. Carril returned, with the bards, from the tomb of Dun-lora's king. The voice

into a proverb; and the highest compliment, that could be paid to a woman, was to compare her person with *the daughter of Cormac*.

'S tu fein an Ros-crána.

Siol Chormac na n'ioma lán.

of morning shall not come, to the dusky bed of the hero. No more, shalt thou hear the tread of roes, around thy narrow house.

(1) As roll the troubled clouds, round a meteor of night, when they brighten their sides, with its light, along the heaving sea: so gathered Erin, around the gleaming form of Atha's king. He, tall in the midst, careless lifts, at times, his spear: as swells or falls the sound of Fonar's distant harp.

(2) Near him leaned, against a rock, Sul-

(1) The poet changes the scene to the Irish camp. The images introduced here are magnificent, and have that sort of *terrible beauty*, if I may use the expression, which occurs so frequently in the compositions of Ossian. The troubled motion of the army, and the sedate and careless attitude of Cathmor, form a contrast, which, as I have before remarked, heightens the features of description, and is calculated to enliven poetry.

(2) In order to illustrate this passage, I shall give, here, the history on which it is founded, as I have gathered it from other poems. The nation of the Fir-bolg who inhabited the south of Ireland, being originally descended from the Belgæ, who possessed the south and south-west coast of Britain, kept up, for many ages, an amicable correspondence with their mother-country; and sent aid to the British Belgæ, when they were pressed by the Romans or other new-comers from the continent. Con-mor, king of Inis-huna, (that part of South-Britain which is over-against the Irish coast)

malla (1) of blue eyes, white-bosomed daughter of Conmor king of Inis-huna. To his aid came blue-shielded Cathmor, and rolled his foes away. Sull-malla beheld him stately in the hall of feasts; nor careless rolled the eyes of Cathmor on the long-haired maid.

The third day arose, and Fithil (2) came

being attacked, by what enemy is not mentioned, sent for aid to Cairbar, lord of Atha, the most potent chief of the Firbolg. Cairbar dispatched his brother Cathmor to the assistance of Conmor. Cathmor, after various vicissitudes of fortune, put an end to the war, by the total defeat of the enemies of Inis-huna, and returned in triumph to the residence of Conmor. There, at a feast, Sul-malla, the daughter of Conmor, fell desperately in love with Cathmor, who, before her passion was disclosed, was recalled to Ireland by his brother Cairbar, upon the news of the intended expedition of Fingal, to re-establish the family of Conar on the Irish throne.—The wind being contrary, Cathmor remained, for three days, in a neighbouring bay, during which time Sul-malla disguised herself, in the habit of a young warrior, and came to offer him her service, in the war. Cathmor accepted of the proposal, sailed for Ireland, and arrived in Ulster a few days before the death of Cairbar.

(1) Sul-malla, *slowly rolling eyes*, Caon-mór, *mild and tall*. Inis-huna, *green island*.

(2) Fithil, *an inferior bard*. It may either be taken here for the proper name of a man, or in the literal sense, as the bards were the heralds

BOOK IV. AN EPIC POEM. 101

from Erin of the streams. He told of the lifting up of the shield (1) on Morven, and the danger of red-haired Cairbar. Cathmor raised the sail at Cluba; but the winds were

and messengers of those times. Cathmor, it is probable, was absent, when the rebellion of his brother Cairbar, and the assassination of Cormac, king of Ireland, happened. The traditions, which are handed down with the poem, say that Cathmor and his followers had only arrived from Inishuna, three days before the death of Cairbar, which sufficiently clears his character from any imputation of being concerned in the conspiracy, with his brother.

(1) The ceremony which was used by Fingal, when he prepared for an expedition, is related, by Ossian, in one of his lesser poems. A bard, at midnight, went to the hall, where the tribes feasted upon solemn occasions, raised the *war-song*, and thrice called the Spirits of their deceased ancestors to come, *on their clouds*, to behold the actions of their children. He then fixed the *shield of Trenmor*, on a tree on the rock of Selma, striking it, at times, with the blunt end of a spear, and singing the war-song between. Thus he did, for three successive nights, and in the mean time, messengers were dispatched to convene the tribes; or, as Ossian expresses it, *to call them from all their streams*. This phrase alludes to the situation of the residences of the clans, which were generally fixed in valleys, where the torrents of the neighbouring mountains were collected into one body, and became *large streams* or rivers.—The *lifting up of the shield*, was the phrase for beginning a war,

in other lands. Three days he remained on the coast, and turned his eyes on Connor's halls.—He remembered the daughter of strangers, and his sigh arose.—Now when the winds awaked the wave : from the hill came a youth in arms; to lift the sword with Cathmor in his echoing field.—It was the white-armed Sul-malla : secret she dwelt beneath her helmet. Her steps were in the path of the king ; on him her blue eyes rolled with joy, when he lay by his roaring streams.—But Cathmor thought, that, on Lumon, she still pursued the roes : or fair on a rock, stretched her white hand to the wind ; to feel its course from Inisfail the green dwelling of her love. He had promised to return, with his white-bosomed sails.—The maid is near thee, king of Atha, leaning on her rock.

The tall forms of the chiefs stood around : all but dark-browed Foldath (1). He stood beneath a distant tree, rolled into his haugh-

(1) The surly attitude of Foldath, is a proper preamble to his after behaviour. Chafed with the disappointment of the victory which he promised himself, he becomes passionate and over-bearing. The quarrel which succeeds between him and Maltheos was, no doubt, introduced by the poet, to raise the character of Cathmor, whose superior worth shines forth, in his manly manner of ending the difference between the chiefs.

BOOK IV. AN EPIC POEM. 103

ty soul. His bushy hair whistles in wind. At times, bursts the hum of a song.—He struck the tree, at length, in wrath, and rushed before the king.

Calm and stately, to the beam of the oak, arose the form of young Hidalla. His hair falls round his blushing cheek, in wreaths of waving light. Soft was his voice in Clonra (1), in the valley of his fathers; when he touched the harp, in the hall, near his roaring streams.

King of Erin, said the youth, now is the time of feasts. Bid the voice of bards arise, and roll the night away. The soul returns, from song, more terrible to war.—Darkness settles on Inis-fail: from hill to hill bend the skirted clouds. Far and grey, on the heath, the dreadful strides of ghosts are seen: the ghosts of those who fell bend forward to their song.—Bid thou the harps to rise, and brighten the dead, on their wandering blasts.

Be all the dead forgot, said Foldath's bursting wrath. Did not I fail in the field, and shall I hear the song? Yet was not my course harmless in battle: blood was a stream around my steps. But the feeble were behind

(1) Claon-rath, *winding field*. The *th* are seldom pronounced audibly in the Galic language.

me, and the foe has escaped my sword.—In Clon-ra's vale touch thou the harp; let Dura answer to thy voice; while some maid looks, from the wood, on thy long, yellow locks.—Fly from Lubar's echoing plain: it is the field of heroes.

King of Temora (1), Malthos said, it is thine to lead in war. Thou art a fire to our eyes, on the dark-brown field. Like a blast thou hast past over hosts, and laid them low in blood; but who has heard thy words returning from the field? — The wrathful delight in death: their remembrance rests on the wounds of their spear. Strife is folded in their thoughts: their words are ever heard.—Thy course, chief of Moma, was like a troubled stream. The dead were rolled on thy path: but others also lift the spear. We were not feeble behind thee, but the foe was strong.

The king beheld the rising rage, and bending forward of either chief: for half-unsheated, they held their swords, and rolled their silent eyes.—Now would they have mixed in horrid fray, had not the wrath of

(1) This speech of Malthos is, throughout, a severe reprimand to the blustering behaviour of Faldath. It abounds with that laconic eloquence, and indirect manner of address, which is so justly admired in the short speech of Ajax, in the ninth book of the Iliad.

BOOK IV. AN EPIC POEM. 109

Cathmor burned. He drew his sword : it gleamed thro' night, to the high-flaming oak.

Sons of pride, said the king, allay your swelling souls. Retire in night.—Why should my rage arise ? Should I contend with both in arms ?—It is no time for strife. Retire, ye clouds at my feast. Awake my soul no more.—They sunk from the king on either side ; like (1) two columns of morning mist, when the sun rises, between them, on his glittering rocks. Dark is their rolling on either side ; each towards its reedy pool.

Silent sat the chiefs at the feast. They looked, at times, on Atha's king, where he strode, on his rock, amidst his settling soul.—The host lay, at length, on the field : sleep descended on Moi-lena.—The voice

(1) The poet could scarcely find, in all nature, a comparison so favourable as this to the superiority of Cathmor over his two chiefs. I shall illustrate this passage with another from a fragment of an ancient poem, just now in my hands. —“As the sun is above the vapours, which his beams have raised ; so is the soul of the king above the sons of fear. They roll dark below him ; he rejoices in the robe of his beams. But when feeble deeds wander on the soul of the king, he is a darkened sun rolled along the sky : the valley is sad below : flowers wither beneath the drops of the night.”

of Fonar rose alone, beneath his distant tree. It rose in the praise of Cathmor son of Larthon (1) of Lumon. But Cathmor did not hear his praise. He lay at the roar of a stream. The rustling breeze of night flew over his whistling locks.

Cairbar came to his dreams, half-seen from his low-hung cloud. Joy rose darkly in

(1) Lear-thon, *sea-wave*, the name of the chief of that colony of the Fir-bolg, which first migrated into Ireland. Larthon's first settlement in that country is related in the seventh book. He was the ancestor of Cathmor; and is here called *Larthon of Lumon*, from a high hill of that name in Inis-huna, the ancient seat of the Fir-bolg.—The poet preserves the character of Cathmor throughout. He had mentioned, in the first book, the aversion of that chief to praise, and we find him here lying at the side of a stream, that the noise of it might drown the voice of Fonar, who, according to the custom of the times, sung his eulogium in his *evening song*. Tho' other chiefs, as well as Cathmor, might be averse to hear their own praise, we find it the universal policy of the times, to allow the bards to be as extravagant as they pleased in their encomiums on the leaders of armies, in the presence of their people. The vulgar, who had no great ability to judge for themselves, received the characters of their princes, entirely upon the faith of the bards. The good effects which an high opinion of its ruler has upon a community, are too obvious to require explanation; on the other hand, distrust of the abilities of leaders produces the worst consequences.

his face : he had heard the song of Carril (1).
 —A blast sustained his dark-skirted cloud ;
 which he seized in the bosom of night, as
 he rose, with his fame, towards his airy hall.
 Half-mixed with the noise of the stream,
 he poured his feeble words.

Joy meet the soul of Cathmor : his voice
 was heard on Moi-lena. The bard gave his
 song to Cairbar : he travels on the wind.
 My form is in my father's hall, like the
 gliding of a terrible light, which winds
 thro' the desert, in a stormy night.—No bard
 shall be wanting at thy tomb, when thou
 art lowly laid. The sons of song love the
 valiant.—Cathmor, thy name is a plea-
 sant gale.—The mournful sounds arise ! On

(1) Carril, the son of Kinfena, by the orders
 of Ossian, sung the funeral elegy at the tomb of
 Cairbar. See the second book, towards the end.
 In all the poems of Ossian, the visit of ghosts, to
 their living friends, are short, and their language
 obscure, both which circumstances, tend to throw
 a solemn gloom on these supernatural scenes.
 Towards the latter end of the speech of the ghost
 of Cairbar, he foretells the death of Cathmor, by
 enumerating those signals which, according to the
 opinion of the times, preceded the death of a
 person renowned. It was thought that the ghosts of
 deceased bards sung, for three nights preceding
 the death (near the place where his tomb was to
 be raised) round an unsubstantial figure which re-
 presented the body of the person who was to die.

Lubar's field there is a voice!—Louder still ye shadowy ghosts! the dead were full of fame.—Shrilly swells the feeble sound.—The rougher blast alone is heard!—Ah, soon is Cathmor low!

Rolled into himself he flew, wide on the bosom of his blast. The old oak felt his departure, and shook its whistling head. The king started from rest, and took his deathful spear. He lifts his eyes around. He sees but dark-skirted night.

(1) It was the voice of the king; but now his form is gone. Unmarked is your path in the air, ye children of the night. Often, like a reflected beam, are ye seen in the desert wild; but ye retire in your blasts before our steps approach.—Go then, ye feeble race! knowledge with you there is none. Your joys are weak, and like the dreams of our rest, or the light-winged thought that flies across the soul.—Shall Cathmor soon be low? Darkly laid in his

(1) The soliloquy of Cathmor abounds with that magnanimity and love of fame which constitute the hero. Tho' staggered at first with the prediction of Cairbat's ghost, he soon comforts himself with the agreeable prospect of his future renown; and like Achilles, prefers a short and glorious life, to an obscure length of years in retirement and ease.

BOOK IV. AN EPIC POEM. 109

narrow house ? where no morning comes with her half-opened eyes. — Away, thou shade ! to fight is mine, all further thought away ! I rush forth, on eagle wings, to seize my beam of fame. — In the lonely vale of streams, abides the little (1) soul. — Years

(1) From this passage we learn in what extreme contempt an indolent and unwarlike life was held in those days of heroism. Whatever a philosopher may say, in praise of quiet and retirement, I am far from thinking, but they weaken and debase the human mind. When the faculties of the soul are not exerted, they lose their vigour, and low and circumscribed notions take the place of noble and enlarged ideas. Action, on the contrary, and the vicissitudes of fortune which attend it, call forth, by turns, all the powers of the mind, and, by exercising, strengthen them. Hence it is, that in great and opulent states, when property and indolence are secured to individuals, we seldom meet with that strength of mind, which is so common in a nation ; not far advanced in civilization. It is a curious, but just observation ; that great kingdoms seldom produce great characters, which must be altogether attributed to that indolence and dissipation, which are the inseparable companions of too much property and security. Rome, it is certain, had more real great men within it, when its power was confined within the narrow bounds of Larium, than when its dominion extended over all the known world ; and one petty state of the Saxon heptarchy had, perhaps, as much genuine spirit in it, as the two British kingdoms united. As a state, we are much more powerful than our ancestors, but we would lose by comparing individuals with them.

roll on, seasons return, but he is still unknown.—In a blast comes cloudy death, and lays his grey head low. His ghost is rolled on the vapour of the fenny field. Its course is never on hills, or mossy vales of wind.—So shall not Cathmor depart, no boy in the field was he, who only marks the bed of roes, upon the echoing hills. My issuing forth was with kings, and my joy in dreadful plains: where broken hosts are rolled away, like seas before the wind.

So spoke the king of Alnecma, brightening in his rising soul: valour, like a pleasant flame, is gleaming within his breast. Stately is his stride on the heath: the beam of east is poured around. He saw his grey host on the field, wide-spreading their ridges in light. He rejoiced, like a spirit of heaven, whose steps come forth on his seas, when he beholds them peaceful round, and all the winds are laid. But soon he awakes the waves, and rolls them large to some echoing coast.

On the rushy bank of a stream, slept the daughter of Inis-huna. The helmet (1) had

(1) The discovery which succeeds this circumstance is well imagined, and naturally conducted. The silence of Cathmor upon this occasion is more expressive of the emotions of his soul, than any speech which the poet could put into his mouth.

BOOK IV. AN EPIC POEM. 111

fallen from her head. Her dreams were in the lands of her fathers. There morning was on the field: grey streams leapt down from the rocks; the breezes, in shadowy waves, fly o'er the rushy fields. There is the sound that prepares for the chase; and the moving of warriors from the hall. — But tall above the rest is the hero of streamy Atha: he bends his eye of love on Sul-malla, from his stately steps. She turns, with pride, her face away, and careless bends the bow.

Such were the dreams of the maid when Atha's warrior came. He saw her fair face before him, in the midst of her wandering locks. He knew the maid of Lumon. What should Cathmor do?—His sigh arose: his tears came down. But straight he turned away.—This is no time, king of Atha, to wake thy secret soul. The battle is rolled before thee, like a troubled stream.

He struck that warning boss (1), wherein

(1) In order to understand this passage, it is necessary to look to the description of Cathmor's shield, which the poet has given us in the seventh book. This shield had seven principal bosses, the sound of each of which, when struck with a spear, conveyed a particular order from the king to his tribes. The sound of one of them, as here, was the signal for the army to assemble.

dwelt the voice of war. Erin rose around him like the sound of eagle-wings.—Sul-malla started from sleep, in her disordered locks. She seized the helmet from earth, and trembled in her place. Why should they know in Erin of the daughter of Inis-huna? for she remembered the race of kings, and the pride of her soul arose.

Her steps are behind a rock, by the blue-winding stream (1) of a vale : where dwelt the dark-brown hind ere yet the war arose. Thither came the voice of Cathmor, at times, to Sul-malla's ear. Her soul is darkly sad; she pours her words on wind.

(2) The dreams of Inis-huna departed : they are rolled away from my soul. I hear

(1) This was not the valley of Lona to which Sul-malla afterwards retired.

(2) Of all passages in the works of Ossian these lyric pieces lose most, by a literal prose translation, as the beauty of them does not so much depend on the strength of thought, as on the elegance of expression and harmony of numbers. It has been observed, that an author is put to the severest test, when he is stripped of the ornaments of versification, and delivered down in another language in prose. Those, therefore, who have seen how awkward a figure even Homer and Virgil make, in a version of this sort, will think the better of the compositions of Ossian.

BOOK IV. AN EPIC POEM. 113

not the chace in my land. I am concealed in the skirts of war. I look forth from my cloud, but no beam appears to light my path. I behold my warrior low; for the broad-shielded king is near; he that overcomes in danger; Fingal of the spears. — Spirit of departed Conmor, are thy steps on the bosom of winds? Comest thou, at times, to other lands, father of sad Sul-malla? Thou dost come, for I have heard thy voice at night; while yet I rose on the wave to streamy Inis-fail. The ghost of fathers, they say (1), can seize the souls of

(1) Con-mor, the father of Sul-malla, was killed in that war, from which Cathmor delivered Inis-huna. Lormar his son succeeded Conmor. It was the opinion of the times, when a person was reduced to a pitch of misery, which could admit of no alleviation, that the ghosts of his ancestors called his soul away. This supernatural kind of death was called *the voice of the dead*; and is believed by the superstitious vulgar to this day.

There is no people in the world, perhaps, who gave more universal credit to apparitions, and the visits of the ghosts of the deceased to their friends, than the common highlanders. This is to be attributed as much, at least, to the situation of the country they possess, as to that credulous disposition which distinguishes an unenlightened people. As their business was feeding of cattle, in dark and extensive desarts, so their journeys lay over wide and unfrequented heaths where, often, they were obliged to sleep in the open air, amidst the whistling of winds, and roar of water-falls. The

their race, while they behold them lonely
in the midst of woe. Call me, my father,
when the king is low on earth; for then I
shall be lonely in the midst of woe.

gloominess of the scenes around them was apt to
beget that melancholy disposition of mind, which
most readily receives impressions of the extraordi-
nary and supernatural kind. Falling asleep in this
gloomy mood, and their dreams being disturbed
by the noise of the elements around, it is no matter
of wonder, that they thought they heard the *voice
of the dead*. This *voice of the dead*, however, was,
perhaps, no more than a shriller whistle of the winds
in an old tree, or in the chinks of a neighbour-
ing rock. It is to this cause I ascribe those many
and improbable tales of ghosts, which we meet with
in the highlands: for, in other respects, we do
not find that the highlanders are more credulous
than their neighbours.

TEMORA:

AN

EPIC POEM,

BOOK FIFTH.

ARGUMENT to Book V.

Ossian, after a short address to the harp of Cona, describes the arrangement of both armies on either side of the river Lubar. Fingal gives the command to Fillan: but, at the same time, orders Gaul, the son of Morni, who had been wounded in the hand in the preceding battle, to assist him with his counsel. The army of the Fir-bolg is commanded by Foldath. The general onset is described. The great actions of Fillan. He kills Rothmar and Culmin. But when Fillan conquers, in one wing, Foldath presses hard on the other. He wounds Dermid, the son of Duthno, and puts the whole wing to flight. Dermid deliberates with himself, and, at last, resolves to put a stop to the progress of Foldath, by engaging him in single combat.—When the two chiefs were approaching towards one another, Fillan came suddenly to the relief of Dermid; engaged, Foldath, and killed him. The behaviour of Malthos towards the fallen Foldath. Fillan puts the whole army of the Fir-bolg to flight. The book closes with an address to Clatho, the mother of that hero.

TEMORA:

T E M O R A :

AN

E P I C P O E M.

B O O K F I F T H.

(1) **T**HOU dweller between the shields that hang on high in Ossian's hall, descend from

(1) These abrupt addresses give great life to the poetry of Ossian. They are all in a lyric measure. The old men, who retain, on memory, the compositions of Ossian, shew much satisfaction when they come to those parts of them, which are in rhyme, and take great pains to explain their beauties, and inculcate the meaning of their obsolete phrases, on the minds of their hearers. This attachment does not proceed from the superior beauty of these lyric pieces, but rather from a taste for rhyme which the modern bards have established among the highlanders. Having no genius themselves for the sublime and pathetic, they placed the whole beauty of poetry in the returning harmony of similar sounds. The seducing charms of rhyme soon weaned their countrymen from that attachment they long had to the recitative of Ossian: and, tho' they still admired his compositions, their admiration was founded more on his antiquity, and the detail of facts which he gave, than on his poetical excellence. Rhiming, in process of time, became so much reduced into a system, and was so universally understood,

VOL. III.

H

thy place, O harp, and let me hear thy voice.—Son of Alpin, strike the string; thou must awake the soul of the bard. The murmur of Lora's (1) stream has rolled the tale away.—I stand in the cloud of years: few are its openings towards the past, and when the vision comes, it is but dim and dark.—I hear thee, harp of Cona; my soul returns, like a breeze, which the sun brings back to the vale, where dwelt the lazy mist.

(2) Lubar is bright before me, in the

that every cow-herd composed tolerable verses. These poems, it is true, were a description of nature; but of nature in its rudest form; a group of uninteresting ideas dressed out in the flowing harmony of monotonous verses. Void of merit as those vulgar compositions were, they fell little short of the productions of the regular bards; for when all poetical excellence is confined to sounds alone, it is within the power of every one possessed of a good ear.

(1) Lora is often mentioned; it was a small and rapid stream in the neighbourhood of Selma. There is no vestige of this name now remaining; tho' it appears from a very old song, which the translator has seen, that one of the small rivers on the north-west coast was called Lora some centuries ago.

(2) From several passages in the poem we may form a distinct idea of the scene of the action of Temora. At a small distance from one another rose

windings of its vale. On either side, on their hills, rise the tall forms of the kings; their people are poured around them, bending forward to their words; as if their fathers spoke, descending from their winds.—But the kings were like two rocks in the midst, each with its dark head of pines, when they are seen in the desert, above low-falling mist. High on their face are streams, which spread their foam on blasts.

Beneath the voice of Cathmor poured Erin, like the sound of flame. Wide they came down to Lubar; before them is the stride of Foldath. But Cathmor retired to

the hills of Mora and Lona: the first possessed by Fingal, the second by the army of Cathmor. Through the intermediate plain ran the small river Lubar, on the banks of which all the battles were fought, excepting that between Cairbar and Oscar, related in the first book. This last mentioned engagement happened, to the north of the hill of Mora, of which Fingal took possession, after the army of Cairbar fell back to that of Cathmor. At some distance, but within sight of Mora, towards the west, Lubar issued from the mountain of Crommal, and after a short course thro' the plain of Mòil-ena, discharged itself into the sea near the field of battle. Behind the mountain of Crommal ran the small stream of Levath, on the banks of which Fead-arho, the son of Cairbre, the only person remaining of the race of Conar, lived concealed in a cave, during the usurpation of Cairbar, the son of Borbar-duthul.

his hill, beneath his bending oaks. The tumbling of a stream is near the king; he lifts, at times, his gleaming spear. It was a flame to his people, in the midst of war. Near him stood the daughter of Con-mor, leaning on her rock. She did not rejoice over the strife: her soul delighted not in blood. A valley (1) spreads green behind the hill, with its three blue streams. The sun is there in silence; and the dun mountain-roes come down. On these are turned the eyes of Inis-huna's white-bosomed maid.

Fingal beheld, on high, the son of Bor-bar-duthul: he saw the deep-rolling of Erin, on the darkened plain. He struck that warning boss, which bids the people obey; when he sends his chiefs before them, to the field of renown. Wide rose their spears to the sun; their echoing shields reply around.—Fear, like a vapor, did not wind among the host: for he, the king, was near, the strength of streamy Morven.—Gladness brightened the hero, we heard his words of joy.

Like the coming forth of winds, is the

(1) It was to this valley Sul-malla retired, during the last and decisive battle between Fingal and Cathmor. It is described in the seventh book, where it is called the vale of Lona, and the residence of a Druid.

found of Morven's sons! They are mountain waters, determined in their course. Hence is Fingal renowned, and his name in other lands. He was not a lonely beam in danger; for your steps were always near.—But never was I a dreadful form, in your presence, darkened into wrath. My voice was no thunder to your ears: mine eyes sent forth no death.—When the haughty appeared, I beheld them not. They were forgot at my feasts: like mist they melted away.—A young beam is before you; few are his paths to war. They are few, but he is valiant: defend my dark-haired son. Bring him back with joy: Hereafter he may stand alone. His form is like his fathers: his soul is a flame of their fire.—Son of car-borne Morni, move behind the son of Clatho: let thy voice reach his ear, from the skirts of war. Not unobserved rolls battle, before thee, breaker of the shields.

The king strode, at once, away to Cormul's (1) lofty rock. As, slow, I lifted my

(1) The rock of Cormul rose on the hill of Mora, and commanded a prospect of the field of battle. The speech of Fingal, which immediately precedes this passage, is worthy of being remarked, as the language, not only, of a warlike but a good king. The confidence which his people reposed in him, was as much the result of his clemency and military merit, as the consequence of that affec-

steps behind ; came forward the strength of Gaul. His shield hung loose on its thong ; he spoke, in haste, to Ossian. — Bind (1), son of Fingal, this shield, bind it high to the side of Gaul. The foe may behold it, and think I left the spear. If I shall fall, let my tomb be hid in the field ; for fall I must without my fame ; mine arm cannot lift the steel. Let not Evir-choma hear it, to blush between her locks. — Fillan, the mighty behold us ; let us not forget the strife. Why should they come, from their hills, to aid our flying field.

He strode onward, with the sound of his shield. My voice pursued him, as he went. Can the son of Mornay fall without his fame in Erin ? But the deeds of the mighty forsake their souls of fire. They rush careless over the fields of renown : their words are never heard. — I rejoiced over the king, where he sat in his wandering locks, amidst the mountain-wind.

In two dark ridges bend the hosts, towards each other, at Lubar. Here Foldath rose a

tion which men, uncorrupted with the vices of advanced society, naturally have for the chief of their blood and hereditary prince.

(1) It is necessary to remember, that Gaul was wounded ; which occasions his requiring here the assistance of Ossian to bind his shield on his side.

pillar of darkness : there brightened the youth of Fillan. Each, with his spear in the stream, sent forth the voice of war. — Gaul struck the shield of Morven : at once they plunge in battle. — Steel poured its gleam on steel : like the fall of streams shone the field, when they mix their foam together, from two dark-browed rocks. — Behold he comes the son of fame : he lays the people low ! Deaths sit on blasts around him ! — Warriors strew thy paths, O Fillan !

(1) Rothmar, the shield of warriors, stood between two chinky rocks. Two oaks, which winds had bent from high, spread their branches on either side. He rolls his darkening eyes on Fillan, and silent, shades his friends. Fingal saw the approaching fight ; and all his soul arose. — But as the stone of Loda (2) falls, shook, at once, from rock-

(1) Roth-mar, *the sound of the sea before a storm.* Druman-ard, *high ridge.* Culmin, *soft-haired.* Cullallin, *beautiful locks.* Strutha, *streamy river.*

(2) By the stone of Loda, as I have remarked in my notes on some other poems of Ossian, is meant a place of worship among the Scandinavians. Ossian, in his many expeditions to Orkney and Scandinavia, became acquainted with some of the rites of the religion which prevailed in those countries, and frequently alludes to them in his poems. There are some ruins, and circular pales of stone,

ing Druman-ard, when spirits heave the earth in their wrath; so fell blue-shielded Rothmar.

Near are the steps of Culmin; the youth came, bursting into tears. Wrathful he cut the wind, ere yet he mixed his strokes with Fillan. He had first bent the bow with Rothmar, at the rock of his own blue streams. There they had marked the place of the roe, as the sun-beam flew over the fern.—Why, son of Cul-allin, dost thou rush on that beam (1) of light? it is a fire that consumes.

remaining still in Orkney, and the islands of Shetland, which retain, to this day, the name of *Loda* or *Loden*. They seem to have differed materially, in their construction, from those Druidical monuments which remain in Britain, and the western isles. The places of worship among the Scandinavians were originally rude and undorned. In after ages, when they opened a communication with other nations, they adopted their manners, and built temples. That at Upsal, in Sweden, was amazingly rich and magnificent. Haguin, of Norway, built one, near Drontheim, little inferior to the former; and it went always under the name of *Loden*. *Mallet, introduction à l'Histoire de Danemarck.*

(1) The poet, metaphorically, calls Fillan a beam of light. Culmin, mentioned here, was the son of Clonmar, chief of Strutha, by the beautiful Cul-allin. She was so remarkable for the beauty of her person, that she is introduced, frequently, in the similies and allusions of antient

BOOK V. AN EPIC POEM. 125

—Youth of Strutha retire. Your fathers were not equal, in the glittering strife of the field.

The mother of Culmin remains in the hall; she looks forth on blue-rolling Strutha. A whirlwind rises, on the stream, dark-eddying round the ghost of her son. His dogs (1) are howling in their place: his shield is bloody in the hall. — « Art thou fallen, my fair-haired son, in Erin's dismal war »?

As a roe, pierced in secret, lies panting;

poetry. *Mar Chul-aluin Strutha nan fian*; is a line of Ossian in another poem; i. e. *Lovely as Cul-allin of Strutha of the storms.*

(1) Dogs were thought to be sensible of the death of their master, let it happen at ever so great a distance. It was also the opinion of the times, that the arms which warriors left at home became bloody, when they themselves fell in battle. It was from those signs that Cul-allin is supposed to understand that her son is killed; in which she is confirmed by the appearance of his ghost. — Her sudden and short exclamation, on the occasion is more affecting than if she had extended her complaints to a greater length. The attitude of the fallen youth, and Fillan's reflexions over him, are natural and judicious, and come forcibly back on the mind, when we consider, that the supposed situation of the father of Culmin, was so similar to that of Fingal, after the death of Fillan himself.

H v

by her wonted streams, the hunter looks over her feet of wind, and remembers her stately bounding before: so lay the son of Cul-allin, beneath the eye of Fillan. His hair is rolled in a little stream: his blood wandered on his shield. Still his hand held the sword that failed him in the day of his danger. — «Thou art fallen, said Fillan, ere yet thy fame was heard. — Thy father sent thee to war: and he expects to hear thy deeds. He is grey, perhaps, at his streams, turning his dim eyes towards Moilena. But thou shalt not return, with the spoil of the fallen foe ».

Fillan poured the flight of Erin before him, over the echoing heath. — But, man on man, fell Morven before the dark-red rage of Foldath; for, far on the field, he poured the roar of half his tribes. Dermid (1) stood before him in wrath: the sons of Cona gather round. But his shield is cleft by Foldath, and his people poured over the heath.

Then said the foe, in his pride, They have fled, and my fame begins. Go, Malthos, and bid the king (2) to guard the

(1) This Dermid is, probably the same with *Dermid O duine*, who makes so great a figure in the fictions of the Irish bards.

(2) Cathmor.

BOOK V. AN EPIC POEM. 177

dark-rolling of ocean ; that Fingal may not escape from my sword. He must lie on earth. Beside some fen shall his tomb be seen. It shall rise without a song. His ghost shall hover in mist over the reedy pool.

Malthos heard , with darkening doubt ; he rolled his silent eyes. — He knew the pride of Foldath , and looked up to the king on his hill ; then , darkly turning , he plunged his sword in war.

In Clono's (1) narrow vale , were bent

(1) This valley had its name from Clono , son of Lethmal of Lora , one of the ancestors of Dermid , the son of Duthno. His history is thus related in an old poem. In the days of Conar , the son of Trenmaor , the first king of Ireland , Clono passed over into that kingdom , from Caledonia , to aid Conar against the Fir-bolg. Being remarkable for the beauty of his person , he soon drew the attention of Sulmin , the young wife of an Irish chief. She disclosed her passion , which was not properly returned by the Caledonian. The lady sickened , thro' disappointment , and her love for Clono came to the ears of her husband. Fired with jealousy , he vowed revenge. Clono , to avoid his rage , departed from Temora , in order to pass over into Scotland ; and being benighted in the valley mentioned here , he laid him down to sleep. There , (to use the words of the poet) *Lethmal descended in the dreams of Clono ; and told him that danger was near.* For the reader's amusement I shall translate the vision , which does not want poetical merit.

228 TEMORA: BOOK V.

two trees above the streams ; dark in his grief
stood Duthno's silent son. The blood pour-

Ghost of LETHMAL.

" Arise from thy bed of moss ; son of low-laid
Lethmal , arise. The sound of the coming of foes ,
descends along the wind.

C L O N O.

Whose voice is that , like many streams , in the
season of my rest ?

Ghost of LETHMAL.

Arise, thou dweller of the souls of the lovely ;
son of Lethmal , arise.

C L O N O.

How dreary is the night ! The moon is darkened
in the sky ; red are the paths of ghosts , along
its fullen face ! Green-skirted meteors set around.
Dull is the roaring of streams , from the valley of
dim forms. I hear thee , spirit of my father , on
the eddying course of the wind. I hear thee , but
thou bendest not , forward , thy tall form , from
the skirts of night.

As Clono prepared to depart , the husband of Sul-
min came up , with his numerous attendants. Clo-
no defended himself, but , after a gallant resistance,

BOOK V. AN EPIC POEM. 129

ed from his thigh : his shield lay broken near.
His spear leaned against a stone ; why, Dermid , why so sad ?

I hear the roar of battle. My people are alone. My steps are slow on the heath , and no shield is mine.—Shall he then prevail ? —It is then after Dermid is low ! I will call thee forth , O Foldath , and meet thee yet in fight.

He took his spear , with dreadful joy. The son of Morni came. — « Stay ; son of Duthno , stay thy speed ; thy steps are marked with blood. No bossy shield is thine. Why shouldst thou fall unarmed » ? — King of Strumon , give thou thy shield. It has often rolled back the war. I shall stop the chief , in his course. — Son of Morni , dost thou behold that stone ? It lifts its grey head thro' grass. There dwells a chief of the race of Dermid. — Place me there in night (1).

he was overpowered and slain. He was buried in the place where he was killed , and the valley was called after his name. Dermid , in his request to Gaul the son of Morni , which immediately follows this paragraph , alludes to the tomb of Clono , and his own connection with that unfortunate chief.

(1) The brevity of the speech of Gaul , and the laconic reply of Dermid , are judicious and well suited to the hurry of the occasion. The incidents

He slowly rose against the hill, and saw the troubled field. The gleaming ridges of the fight, disjoined and broken round. — As distant fires, on heath by night, now seem as lost in smoke, then rearing their red streams on the hill, as blow or cease the winds: so met the intermitting war the eye of broad-shielded Dermid. — Thro' the host are the strides of Foldath, like some dark ship on wintry waves, when it issues from between two isles, to sport on echoing seas.

Dermid, with rage, beheld his course. He strove to rush along. But he failed in the

which Ossian has chosen to diversify his battles, are interesting, and never fail to awaken our attention. I know that want of particularity in the wounds, and diversity in the fall of those that are slain, have been among the objections, started, to the poetical merit of Ossian's poems. The criticism, without partiality I may say it, is unjust, for our poet has introduced as great a variety of this sort, as he, with propriety, could within the compass of so short poems. It is confessed, that Homer has a greater variety of deaths than any other poet that ever appeared. His great knowledge in anatomy can never be disputed; but, I am far from thinking, that his battles, even with all their novelty of wounds, are the most beautiful parts of his poems. The human mind dwells with disgust upon a protracted scene of carnage; and, tho' the introduction of the terrible is necessary to the grandeur of heroic poetry, yet I am convinced, that a medium ought to be observed,

BOOK V. AN EPIC POEM. 131

midst of his steps ; and the big tear came down.—He sounded his father's horn ; and thrice struck his bossy shield. He called thrice the name of Foldath , from his roaring tribes. — Foldath , with joy , beheld the chief ; he lifted high his bloody spear. — As a rock is marked with streams , that fell troubled down its side in a storm ; so , streaked with wandering blood , is the dark form of Moma.

The host , on either side , withdrew from the contending of kings. — They raised , at once , their gleaming points. — Rushing came Fillan of Moruth (1). Three paces back Foldath withdrew ; dazzled with that beam of light , which came , as issuing from a cloud , to save the wounded hero.—Growing in his pride he stood , and called forth all his steel.

As meet two broad-winged eagles , in their sounding strife , on the winds : so rushed

(1) The rapidity of this verse , which indeed is but faintly imitated in the translation , is amazingly expressive in the original. One hears the very rattling of the armour of Fillan. The intervention of Fillan is necessary here ; for as Dermid was wounded before , it is not to be supposed , he could be a match for Foldath. Fillan is often poetically , called the *son of Moruth* , from a stream of that name in Morven , near which he was born.

the two chiefs, on Moi-lena, into gloomy fight.—By turns are the steps of the kings⁽¹⁾ forward on their rocks; for now the dusky war seems to descend on their swords.—Cathmor feels the joy of warriors on his mossy hill: their joy in secret when dangers rise equal to their souls. His eye is not turned on Lubar, but on Morven's dreadful king; for he beheld him, on Mora, rising in his arms.

Foldath ⁽²⁾ fell on his shield; the spear

(1) Fingal and Cathmor.

(2) The fall of Foldath, if we may believe tradition, was predicted to him, before he had left his own country to join Cairbar, in his designs on the Irish throne. He went to the cave of Moma, to enquire of the spirits of his fathers, concerning the success of the enterprise of Cairbar. The responses of oracles are always attended with obscurity, and liable to a double meaning: Foldath, therefore, put a favourable interpretation on the prediction, and pursued his adopted plan of aggrandizing himself with the family of Atha. I shall, here, translate the answer of *the ghosts of his ancestors*, as it was handed down by tradition. Whether the legend is really ancient, or the invention of a late age, I shall not pretend to determine, tho', from the phraseology, I should suspect the last.

FOLDATH, *addressing the spirits of his fathers.*

Dark, I stand in your presence; fathers of Fol-

of Fillan pierced the king. Nor looked the youth on the fallen, but onward rolled the war. The hundred voices of death arose.—
 «Stay, son of Fingal, stay thy speed. Beholdest thou not that gleaming form, a dreadful sign of death? Awaken not the king of Alnecma. Return, son of blue-eyed Clatho».

dath, hear. Shall my steps pass over Atha, to Ullin of the roes?

The Answer.

Thy steps shall pass over Atha, to the green dwelling of kings. There shall thy stature arise, over the fallen, like a pillar of thunder-clouds. There, terrible in darkness, shalt thou stand, till the *reflected beam*, or *Clon-cath* of Moruth, come; Moruth of many streams, that roars in distant land».

Cloncath, or *reflected beam*, say my traditional authors, was the name of the sword of Fillan; so that it was, in the latent signification of the word *Clon-cath*, that the deception lay. My principal reason for introducing this note, is, that if this tradition is equally ancient with the poem, which, by the bye, is doubtful, it serves to shew, that the religion of the Fir-lbog differed from that of the Caledonians, as we never find the latter enquiring of the spirits of their deceased ancestors.

Malthos (1) saw Foldath low. He darkly stood above the king. Hatred was rolled from his soul. He seemed a rock in the desert, on whose dark side are the trickling of waters, when the slow-falling mist has left it, and its trees are blasted with winds. He spoke to the dying hero, about the narrow house. Whether shall thy grey stone rise in Ullin? or in Moma's (2) woody land, where the sun looks, in secret, on the blue streams of Dal-rutho (3)? There are the steps of thy daughter, blue-eyed Dardu-lena.

(1) The characters of Foldath and Malthos are well sustained. They were both dark and sultry, but each in a different way. Foldath was impetuous and cruel: Malthos stubborn and incredulous. Their attachment to the family of Atha was equal; their bravery in battle the same. Foldath was vain and ostentatious: Malthos unindulgent but generous. His behaviour here, towards his enemy Foldath, shews, that a good heart often lies concealed under a gloomy and sullen character.

(2) Moma was the name of a country in the south of Connaught, once famous for being the residence of an Archdruid. The cave of Moma was thought to be inhabited by the spirits of the Firbolg, and their posterity sent to enquire there, as to an oracle, concerning the issue of their wars.

(3) Dal-ruath, *parched or sandy field*. The etymology of Dardu-lena is uncertain. The daughter of Foldath was, probably, so called, from a place in Ulster, where her father had defeated part of

BOOK V. AN EPIC POEM. 135

Rememberest thou her, said Foldath, because no son is mine ; no youth to roll the battle before him, in revenge of me ? Malthos, I am revenged. I was not peaceful in the field. Raise the tombs of those I have slain, around my narrow house. Often shall I forsake the blast, to rejoice above their graves ; when I behold them spread around, with their long-whistling grass.

His soul rushed to the vales of Moma, and came to Dardu-lena's dreams, where she slept, by Dalrutho's stream, returning from the chace of the hinds. Her bow is near the maid, unstrung ; the breezes fold her long hair on her breasts. Cloathed in the beauty of youth, the love of heroes lay. Dark bending, from the skirts of the wood, her wounded father came. He appeared, at times, then seemed as hid in mist.—Bursting into tears she rose : she knew that the chief was low. To her came a beam from his soul when folded in its storms. Thou wert the last of his race, blue-eyed Dardu-lena !

Wide-spreading over echoing Lubar, the flight of Bolga is rolled along. Fillan hung

the adherents of Artho, king of Ireland. Dardulena ; *the dark wood of Moi-lena*. As Foldath was proud and ostentatious, it would appear, that he transferred the name of a place, where he himself had been victorious, to his daughter.

forward on their steps ; and strewed , with dead , the heath. Fingal rejoiced over his son.—Blue-shielded Cathmor rose.—(1) Son of Alpin , bring the harp : give Fillan's praise to the wind : raise high his praise , in my hall , while yet he shines in war.

Leave , blue-eyed Clatho , leave thy hall. Behold that early beam of thine. The host is withered in its course. No further look—

(1) These sudden transitions from the subject are not uncommon in the compositions of Ossian. That in this place has a peculiar beauty and propriety. The suspense , in which the mind of the reader is left , conveys the idea of Fillan's danger more forcibly home , than any description the poet could introduce. There is a sort of eloquence , in silence with propriety. A minute detail of the circumstances of an important scene is generally cold and insipid. The human mind , free and fond of thinking for itself , is disgusted to find every thing done by the poet. It is , therefore , his business only to mark the most striking out-lines , and to allow the imaginations of his readers to finish the figure for themselves.

The address to Clatho , the mother of Fillan , which concludes this book , if we regard the versification of the original , is one of the most beautiful passages in the poem. The wild simplicity and harmony of its cadences are inimitably beautiful. It is sung still by many in the north , and is distinguished by the name of *Laoi chaon Chlatho* : i. e. *The harmonious hymn of Clatho*. The book ends in the afternoon of the third day , from the opening of the poem.

BOOK V. AN EPIC POEM. 137

it is dark.—Light-trembling from the harp,
strike, virgins, strike the sound.—No hun-
ter he descends, from the dewy haunt of
the bounding roe. He bends not his bow on
the wind; or sends his grey arrow abroad.

Deep-folded in red war, the battle rolls
against his side. Or, striding midst the ridgy
strife, he pours the deaths of thousands forth.
Fillan is like a spirit of heaven, that de-
scends from the skirt of his blast. The trou-
bled ocean feels his steps, as he strides from
wave to wave. His path kindles behind him;
islands shake their heads on the heaving
seas.

the visitor from his new surroundings. The building from the inside reveals how the students, during the day, benefit from the various facilities and the library, which is well-stocked with books and periodicals. The visitor is also shown the various facilities and the library, which is well-stocked with books and periodicals.

There is a small building on the hill on the left side of the road. It is a small building with a gabled roof and a chimney. It is surrounded by a fence. The building is made of brick and has a small porch. It is a small building with a gabled roof and a chimney. It is surrounded by a fence. The building is made of brick and has a small porch.

TEMORA:

AN

EPIC POEM.

BOOK SIXTH.

TEMORA:

AN

EPIC POEM

BOOK SIXTH

TEMORA:

ARGUMENT to BOOK VI.

This book opens with a speech of Fingal, who sees Cathmor descending to the assistance of his flying army. The king dispatches Ossian to the relief of Fillan. He himself retires behind the rock of Cormul, to avoid the sight of the engagement between his son and Cathmor. Ossian advances. The descent of Cathmor described. He rallies the army, renews the battle, and, before Ossian could arrive, engages Fillan himself. Upon the approach of Ossian, the combat between the two heroes ceases. Ossian and Cathmor prepare to fight, but night coming on prevents them. Ossian returns to the place where Cathmor and Fillan fought. He finds Fillan mortally wounded, and leaning against a rock. Their discourse. Fillan dies: his body is laid, by Ossian, in a neighbouring cave. — The Caledonian army return to Fingal. He questions them about his son, and understanding that he was killed, retires, in silence, to the rock of Cormul. — Upon the retreat of the army of Fingal, the Fir-bolg advance. Cathmor finds Bran, one of the dogs of Fingal, lying on the shield of Fillan, before the entrance of the cave, where the body of that hero lay. His reflexions thereupon. He returns, in a melancholy mood, to his army.

VOL. III.

I

ARGUMENT to BOOK VI.

Malthos endeavours to comfort him, by the example of his father Borbar-duthul. Cathmor retires to rest. The song of Sul-malla concludes the book, which ends about the middle of the third night, from the opening of the poem.

T E M O R A:

A N

E P I C P O E M.

B O O K S I X T H.

(1) CATHMOR rises on his echoing hill ! Shall Fingal take the sword of Luno ?

(1) I have, in a preceding note, observed that the abrupt manner of Ossian partakes much of the nature of the Drama. The opening of this book is a confirmation of the justness of this observation. Instead of a long detail of circumstances delivered by the poet himself, about the descent of Cathmor from the hill, whereon he sat to behold the battle, he puts the narration in the mouth of Fingal. The relation acquires importance from the character of the speaker. The concern which Fingal shews, when he beholds the *rising of Cathmor*, raises our ideas of the valour of that hero to the highest pitch. The apostrophes which are crowded on one another, are expressive of the perturbation of Fingal's soul, and of his fear for his son, who was not a match for the king of Ireland. The conduct of the poet in removing Fingal from the sight of the engagement, is very judicious; for the king might be induced, from seeing the inequality of the combat between Fillan and Cathmor, to come to battle himself, and so bring about the catastrophe of the poem prematurely. The removal of Fingal affords

But what should become of thy fame, son of white-bosomed Clatho? Turn not thine eyes from Fingal, daughter of Inistore. I shall not quench thy early beam; it shines along my soul.—But rise, O wood-skirted Mora, rise, between the war and me! Why should Fingal behold the strife, lest his dark-haired warrior should fall!—Amidst the song, O Carril, pour the sound of the trembling harp: here are the voices of rocks, and bright tumbling of waters. Father of Oscar lift the spear; defend the young in arms. Conceal thy steps from Fillan's eyes.—He must not know that I doubt his steel.—No cloud of mine shall rise, my son, upon thy soul of fire!

He sunk behind his rock, amidst the sound of Carril's song.—Brightening, in my growing soul, I took the spear of Temora (1).

room to the poet for introducing those affecting scenes which immediately succeed, and are among the chief beauties of the poem.—They who can deny art to Ossian, in conducting the catastrophe of Temora, are certainly more prejudiced against the age he lived in, than is consistent with good sense. I cannot finish this note, without observing the delicacy and propriety of Fingal's address to Ossian. By the appellation of the *father of Oscar*, he raises at once, in the mind of the hero, all that tenderness for the safety of Fillan, which a situation so similar to that of his own son, when he fell, was capable to suggest.

(1) The *spear of Temora* was that which Oscar

BOOK VI. AN EPIC POEM. 145

I saw, along Moi-lena, the wild tumbling of battle, the strife of death, in gleaming rows, disjoined and broken round. Fillan is a beam of fire: from wing to wing is his wasteful course. The ridges of war melt before him. They are rolled, in smoke, from the fields.

(1) Now is the coming forth of Cathmor;

had received, in a present, from Cormac, the son of Artbo, king of Ireland. It was of it that Cairbar made the pretext for quarrelling with Oscar, at the feast, in the first book. After the death of Oscar we find it always in the hands of Ossian. It is said, in another poem, that it was preserved, as a relique, at Temora, from the days of Conar, the son of Trenmor, the first king of Ireland.

(1) The appearance of Cathmor is magnificent; his unconcerned gait, and the effect which his very voice has upon his flying army, are circumstances calculated to raise our ideas of his superior merit and valour. Ossian is very impartial with regard to his enemies: this however, cannot be said of other poets of great eminence and unquestioned merit. Milton, of the first class of poets, is undoubtedly the most irreprehensible in this respect; for we always pity or admire his Devil, but seldom detest him, even tho' he is the arch-enemy of our species. Mankind generally take sides with the unfortunate and daring. It is from this disposition that many readers, tho' otherwise good christians, have almost wished success to Satan, in his desperate and daring voyage from hell, through the regions of chaos and night.

in the armour of kings ! Dark-rolled the eagle's wing above his helmet of fire. Unconcerned are his steps, as if they were to the chace of Atha. He raised, at times, his dreadful voice ; Erin , abashed , gathered round.— Their souls returned back , like a stream : they wondered at the steps of their fear : for he rose , like the beam of the morning on a haunted heath : the traveller looks back , with bending eye , on the field of dreadful forms.

Sudden, from the rock of Moi-lena , are Sul-malla's trembling steps. An oak took the spear from her hand ; half-bent she loosed the lance : but then are her eyes on the king, from amidst her wandering locks. — No friendly strife is before thee : no light contending of bows , as when the youth of Clu-ba (1) came forth beneath the eye of Conmor.

As the rock of Runo, which takes the passing clouds for its robe , seems growing, in gathered darkness, over the streamy heath ; so

(1) Clu-ba , *winding bay* ; an arm of the sea in Inis-huna , or the western coast of South-Britain. It was in this bay that Cathmor was wind-bound when Sul-malla came , in the disguise of a young warrior , to accompany him in his voyage to Ireland. Conmor , the father of Sul-malla , as we learn from her soliloquy , at the close of the fourth book, was dead before the departure of his daughter.

seemed the chief of Atha taller, as gathered his people round. — As different blasts fly over the sea, each behind its dark-blue wave, so Cathmor's words, on every side, poured his warriors forth. — Nor silent on his hill is Fillan; he mixed his words with his echoing shield. An eagle he seemed, with sounding wings, calling the wind to his rock, when he sees the coming forth of the roes, on Lutha's (1) rushy field.

Now they bent forward in battle: death's hundred voices rose; for the kings, on either side, were like fires on the souls of the people. — I bounded along; high rocks and trees rushed tall between the war and me. — But I heard the noise of steel, between my clanging arms. Rising, gleaming, on the hill, I beheld the backward steps of hosts: their backward steps, on either side, and wildly-looking eyes. The chiefs were met in dreadful fight; the two blue-shielded kings. Tall and dark, thro' gleams of steel, are seen the striving heroes. — I rushed. — My fears for Fillan flew, burning across my soul.

I came; nor Cathmor fled; nor yet advance

(1) Lutha was the name of a valley in Morven, in the days of Ossian. There dwelt Toscar the son of Conloch, the father of Malvina, who, upon that account, is often called *the maid of Lutha*. Lutha signifies *swift stream*.

ced : he sidelong stalked along. An icy rock, cold, tall he seemed. I called forth all my steel. — Silent awhile we strode, on either side of a rushing stream : then, sudden turning, all at once, we raised our pointed spears. — We raised our spears, but night came down. It is dark and silent around ; but where the distant steps of hosts are sounding over the heath.

I came to the place where Fillan (1) fought, Nor voice, nor sound is there. A broken helmet lay on earth ; a buckler cleft in twain. Where, Fillan, where art thou, young chief of echoing Morven ? He heard me leaning against a rock, which bent its grey head over the stream. He heard ; but sullen, dark he stood. At length I saw the chief.

Why standest thou, robed in darkness, son of woody Selma ? Bright is thy path, my brother, in this dark-brown field. Long has been thy strife in battle. Now the horn of Fingal his heard. Ascend to the cloud of

(1) The scenery of the place where Fillan fought, and the situation of that hero, are picturesque and affecting. The distress, which succeeds, is heightened by Ossian's being ignorant, for some time, that his brother was wounded. This kind of suspense is frequent in Ossian's poems. The more unexpected a thing is, the greater impression it makes on the mind when it comes.

BOOK VI. AN EPIC POEM. 149

thy father, to his hill of feasts. In the evening mist he sits, and hears the voice of Carril's harp. Carry joy to the aged, young breaker of the shields.

Can the vanquished carry joy? Ossian, no shield is mine. It lies broken on the field. The eagle-wing of my helmet is torn. It is, when foes fly before them that fathers delight in their sons. But their sighs burst forth, in secret, when their young warriors yield.—No : Fillan will not behold the king. Why should the hero mourn?

Son of blue-eyed Clatho, why dost thou awake my soul? Wert thou not a burning fire before him; and shall he not rejoice?—Such fame belonged not to Ossian; yet was the king still a sun to me. He looked on my steps, with joy: shadows never rose on his face.—Ascend, O Fillan, to Mora: his feast is spread in the folds of mist.

Ossian, give me that broken shield: these feathers that are rolled in the wind. Place them near to Fillan, that less of his fame may fall. Ossian, I begin to fail.—Lay me in that hollow rock. Raise no stone above: lest one should ask about my fame. I am fallen in the first of my fields; fallen without renown. Let thy voice alone send joy to

my flying soul. Why should the feeble know
where dwells the lost beam of Clatho (1)?

(1) In this, as well as the former publication, I have only admitted into the text compleat poems, or independent episodes; the fragments which remain of the compositions of Ossian, I have chosen to throw, occasionally, into the notes. I shall here give a translation of a part of a poem concerning the death of Fillan. It is a dialogue between Clatho the mother, and Bos-mina the sister, of that hero.

CLATHO.

« Daughter of Fingal, arise: thou light between
thy locks! Lift thy fair head from rest, soft-gliding
sun-beam of Selma! I beheld thy arms, on
thy breast, white-tossed amidst thy wandering locks:
when the rustling breeze of the morning came from
the desert of streams. Hast thou seen thy fathers,
Bos-mina, descending in thy dreams? Arise, daughter
of Clatho; dwells there aught of grief in thy
soul?

BOS-MINA.

A thin form passed before me, fading as it
flew: like the darkening wave of a breeze, along
a field of grass. Descend, from thy wall, O harp,
and call back the soul of Bos-mina, it has rolled
away, like a stream. I hear thy pleasant sound.
—I hear thee, O harp, and my voice shall
rise.

BOOK VI. AN EPIC POEM. 151

Is thy spirit on the eddying winds, blue-eyed king of shields? Joy pursue my hero,

How often shall ye rush to war, ye dwellers of my soul? Your paths are distant, kings of men, in Erin of blue streams. Lift thy wing, thou southern breeze, from Clono's darkening heath: spread the sails of Fingal towards the bays of his land.

But who is that, in his strength, darkening in the presence of war? His arm stretches to the foe, like the beam of the sickly sun; when his side is crusted with darkness; and he rolls his dismal course thro' the sky. — Who is it, but the father of Bos-mina? Shall he return till danger is past?

Fillan, thou art a beam by his side; beautiful, but terrible, is thy light. Thy sword is before thee, a blue fire of night. When shalt thou return to thy roes; to the streams of thy rushy fields? When shall I behold thee from Mora, while winds strew my long locks on moss! — But shall a young eagle return from the field where the heroes fall!

CLATHO.

Soft, as the song of Loda, is the voice of Selma's maid. Pleasant to the ear of Clatho is the name of the breaker of shields. — Behold, the king comes from ocean: the shield of Morven is borne

thro' his folded clouds. The forms of thy fathers, O Fillan, bend to receive their son. I behold the spreading of their fire on Mora; the blue-rolling of their misty wreaths.—Joy meet thee my brother.—But we are dark and sad. I behold the foe round the aged, and the wasting away of his fame. Thou art left alone in the field, grey-haired king of Selma.

I laid him in the hollow rock, at the roar of the nightly stream. One red star looked in on the hero: winds lift, at times, his locks. I listened: no sound was heard: for the warrior slept.—As lightning on a cloud, a thought came rushing over my soul.—My eyes rolled in fire: my stride was in the clang of steel.

I will find thee, chief of Atha, in the gathering of thy thousands. Why should that cloud escape, that quenched our early beam? Kindle your meteors, my fathers, to light my daring steps. I will consume in wrath (1)

by bards. The foe has fled before him, like the departure of mist. — I hear not the sounding wings of my eagle; the rushing forth of the son of Clatho.—Thou art dark, O Fingal; shall he not return? . . .

(1) Here the sentence is designedly left unfinished

—Should I not return ! the king is without a son , grey-haired amidst his foes. His arm is not as in the days of old : his fame grows dim in Erin. Let me not behold him from high , laid low in his latter field.—But can I return to the king ? Will he not ask about his son ? « Thou oughtest to defend young Fillan ». — I will meet the foe. — Green Inisfail , thy sounding tread is pleasant to my ear : I rush on thy ridgy host , to shun the

by the poet. The sense is , that he was resolved , like a destroying fire , to consume Cathmor , who had killed his brother. In the midst of this resolution , the situation of Fingal suggests itself to him , in a very strong light. He resolves to return to assist the king in prosecuting the war.—But then his shame for not defending his brother , recurs to him.—He is determined again to go and find out Cathmor.—We may consider him , as in the act of advancing towards the enemy , when the horn of Fingal sounded on Mora , and called back his people to his presence.—This soliloquy is natural : the resolutions which so suddenly follow one another , are expressive of a mind extremely agitated with sorrow and conscious shame ; yet the behaviour of Ossian , in his execution of the commands of Fingal , is so irreprehensible , that it is not easy to determine where he failed in his duty. The truth is , that when men fail in designs which they ardently wish to accomplish , they naturally blame themselves , as the chief cause of their disappointment. The comparison , with which the poet concludes his soliloquy , is very fanciful ; and well adapted to the ideas of those , who live in a country , where lightning is extremely common.

eyes of Fingal. — I hear the voice of the king, on Mora's misty top! — He calls his two sons; I come, my father, in my grief. — I come like an eagle, which the flame of night met in the desert, and spoiled of half his wings.

(1) Distant, round the king, on Mora, the broken ridges of Morven are rolled. They turned their eyes: each darkly bends, on his own ashen spear. — Silent stood the king in the midst. Thought on thought rolled over his soul. As waves on a secret mountain-lake, each with its back of foam. — He looked; no son appeared, with his long-beaming spear. The sighs rose, crowding, from his soul; but he concealed his grief. — At length I stood beneath an oak. No voice of mine was heard. What could I say to Fingal in his hour of woe? — His words rose, at length, in the

(1) This scene is solemn. The poet always places his chief character amidst objects which favour the sublime. The face of the country, the night, the broken remains of a defeated army, and, above all, the attitude and silence of Fingal himself, are circumstances calculated to impress an awful idea on the mind. Ossian is most successful in his night-descriptions. Dark images suited the melancholy temper of his mind. His poems were all composed after the active part of his life was over, when he was blind, and had survived all the companions of his youth: we therefore find a veil of melancholy thrown over the whole.

midst : the people shrunk backward as he spoke (1).

(1) The abashed behaviour of the army of Fingal proceeds rather from shame than fear. The king was not of a tyrannical disposition : *He*, as he professes himself in the fifth book, *never was a dreadful form; in their presence, darkened into wrath. His voice was no thunder to their ears : his eye sent forth no death.*—The first ages of society are not the times of arbitrary power. As the wants of mankind are few, they retain their independence. It is an advanced state of civilization that moulds the mind to that submission to government, of which ambitious magistrates take advantage, and raise themselves into absolute power.

It is a vulgar error, that the common Highlanders lived in abject slavery, under their chiefs. Their high ideas of, and attachment to, the heads of their families, probably, led the unintelligent into this mistake. — When the honour of the tribe was concerned, the commands of the chief were obeyed, without restriction : but, if individuals were oppressed, they threw themselves into the arms of a neighbouring clan, assumed a new name, and were encouraged and protected. The fear of this desertion, no doubt, made the chiefs cautious in their government. As their consequence, in the eyes of others, was in proportion to the number of their people, they took care to avoid every thing that tended to diminish it.

It was but very lately that the authority of the laws extended to the Highlands. Before that time the clans were governed, in civil affairs, not by the verbal commands of the chief, but by what they called *Cleghda*, or the traditional precedents of

Where is the son of Selma, he who led in war ? I behold not his steps , among my people , returning from the field. Fell the young bounding roe , who was so stately on my hills ?—He fell ;—for ye are silent. The shield of war is broke.—Let his armour be near to Fingal ; and the sword of dark-brown Luno. I am waked on my hills : with morning I descend to war.

(1) High on Cormul's rock , an oak flamed

their ancestors. When differences happened between individuals , some of the oldest men in the tribe were chosen umpires between the parties , to decide according to the *Clechda*. The chief interposed his authority , and , invariably , enforced the decision. —In their wars , which were frequent , on account of family-feuds , the chief was less reserved in the execution of his authority , and even then he seldom extended it to the taking the life of any of his tribe. —No crime was capital , except murder , and that was very unfrequent in the highlands. No corporal punishment , of any kind , was inflicted. The memory of an affront of this sort would remain , for ages in a family , and they would seize every opportunity to be revenged , unless it came immediately from the hands of the chief himself ; in that case it was taken , rather as a fatherly correction , than a legal punishment for offences.

(1) This rock of Cormul is often mentioned in the preceding part of the poem. It was on it Fingal and Ossian stood to view the battle. The custom of retiring from the army , on the night prior to their engaging in battle , was universal among the

to the wind. The grey skirts of mist are rolled around; thither strode the king in his wrath. Distant from the host he always lay, when battle burnt within his soul. On two spears hung his shield on high; the gleaming sign of death; that shield, which he was wont to strike, by night, before he rushed to war.—It was then his warriors knew, when the king was to lead in strife; for never was this buckler heard, till Fingal's wrath arose.—Unequal were his steps on high, as he shone in the beam of the oak; he was dreadful as the form of the spirit of night, when he cloaths, on hills, his wild

kings of the Caledonians.—Trenmor, the most renowned of the ancestors of Fingal, is mentioned as the first who instituted this custom. Succeeding bards attributed it to a hero of a latter period.

—In an old poem, which begins with *Mac-Archath nan ceud fról* this custom of retiring from the army, before an engagement, is numbered among the wise institutions of Fergus, the son of Arc or Arcath, the first king of Scots. I shall here translate the passage; in some other note I may, probably, give all that remains of the poem. *Fergus of the hundred streams, son of Arcath who fought of old: thou didst first retire at night: when the foe rolled before thee, in echoing fields. Nor bending in rest is the king: he gathers battles in his soul. Fly, son of the stranger; with morn he shall rush abroad. When, or by whom, this poem was writ, is uncertain. It has much of the spirit of the ancient composition of the Scotch bards; and seems to be a close imitation of the manner of Ossian.*

gestures with mist , and , issuing forth , on the troubled ocean , mounts the car of winds.

Nor settled, from the storm, is Erin's sea of war ; they glittered , beneath the moon, and , low-humming , still rolled on the field.—Alone are the steps of Cathmor , before them on the heath ; he hung forward , with all his arms , on Morven's flying host. Now had he come to the mossy cave , where Fillan lay in night. One tree was bent above the stream , which glittered over the rock.—There shone to the moon the broken shield of Clatho's son ; and near it , on grass , lay hairy-footed Bran (1). He had missed the chief

(1) This circumstance , concerning Bran , the favourite dog of Fingal , is perhaps , one of the most affecting passages in the poem. I remember to have met with an old poem , composed long after the time of Ossian , wherein a story of this sort is very happily introduced. In one of the invasions of the Danes , Ullin-clundu , a considerable chief , on the western coast of Scotland , was killed in a rencounter with a flying party of the enemy , who had landed , at no great distance , from the place of his residence. The few followers who attended him were also slain.—The young wife of Ullin-clundu , who had not heard of his fall , fearing the worst , on account of his long delay , alarmed the rest of his tribe , who went in search of him along the shore. They did not find him ; and the beautiful widow became disconsolate. At length he was discovered , by means of his dog , who sat

BOOK VI. AN EPIC POEM. 159

on Mora, and searched him along the wind.
He thought that the blue-eyed hunter slept;
he lay upon his shield. No blast came over
the heath, unknown to bounding Bran.

Cathmor saw the white-breasted dog; he
saw the broken shield. Darkness is blown
back on his soul; he remembers the falling
away of the people. They come, a stream;
are rolled away; another race succeeds.—
« But some mark the fields, as they pass,
with their own mighty names. The heath,
thro' dark-brown years, is theirs; some blue
stream, winds to their fame. — Of these
be the chief of Atha, when he lays him down

on a rock beside the body, for some days.—
The poem is not just now in my hands; other-
wise its poetical merit might induce me to present
the reader with a translation of it. The stanza con-
cerning the dog, whose name was Du-chos, or
Blackfoot, is very descriptive.

« Dark-sided Du-chos! feet of wind! cold is
thy seat on rocks. He (the dog) sees the roe; his
ears are high; and half he bounds away. He looks
around; but Ullin sleeps; he droops again his head.
The winds come past; dark Du-chos thinks, that
Ullin's voice is there. But still he beholds him si-
lent, laid amidst the waving heath. Dark-sided
Du-chos, his voice no more shall send thee over
the heath!»

on earth. Often may the voice of future times meet Cathmor in the air : when he strides from wind to wind, or folds himself in the wing of a storm ».

Green Erin gathered round the king, to hear the voice of his power. Their joyful faces bend, unequal, forward, in the light of the oak. They who were terrible, were removed : Lubar (1) winds again in their host. Cathmor was that beam from heaven, which shone when his people were dark. He was honoured in the midst. Their souls rose trembling around. The king alone no gladness shewed; no stranger he to war!

Why is the king so sad, said Malthos eagle:

(1) In order to illustrate this passage, it is proper to lay before the reader the scene of the two preceding battles. Between the hills of Mora and Lona lay the plain of Moi-lena, thro' which ran the river Lubar. The first battle, wherein Gaul, the son of Morni, commanded on the Caledonian side, was fought on the banks of Lubar. As there was little advantage obtained, on either side, the armies, after the battle, retained their former positions.

In the second battle, wherein Fillan commanded, the Irish, after the fall of Foldath, were driven up the hill of Lona; but, upon the coming of Cathmor to their aid, they regained their former situation, and drove back the Caledonians, in their turn: so that *Lubar winded again in their host.*

eyed?—Remains there a foe at Lubar? Lives there among them, who can lift the spear? Not so peaceful was thy father, Borbar-duthul (1), sovereign of spears. His rage was a fire that always burned: his joy over fallen foes was great.—Three days feasted the grey-haired hero, when he heard that Calmar fell: Calmar, who aided the race of Ullin, from Lara of the streams. — Often did he feel, with his hands, the steel which, they said, had pierced his foe. He felt it with his hands, for Borbar-duthul's eyes had failed.—Yet was the king a sun to his friends; a gale to lift their branches round. Joy was around him in his halls: he loved the sons of Bolga. His name remains in Atha, like the awful memory of ghosts, whose presence was terrible, but they blew the storm away.—Now let the

(1) Borbar-duthul, the father of Cathmor, was the brother of that Colc-ulla, who is said, in the beginning of the fourth book, to have rebelled against Cormac king of Ireland. Borbar-duthul seems to have retained all the prejudice of his family against the succession of the posterity of Conar, on the Irish throne. From this short episode we learn some facts which tend to throw light on the history of the times. It appears, that, when Swaran invaded Ireland, he was only opposed by the Caël, who possessed Ulster, and the north of that island. Calmar, the son of Matha, whose gallant behaviour and death are related in the third book of Fingal, was the only chief of the race of the Fiebolg, that joined the Caël, or Irish Caledonians,

voices (1) of Erin raise the soul of the king; he that shone when war was dark, and laid the mighty low. — Fonar, from that grey-browed rock, pour the tale of other times: pour it on wide-skirted Erin, as it settles round.

To me, said Cathmor, no song shall rise: nor Fonar sit on the rock of Lubar. The mighty there are laid low. Disturb not their rushing ghosts. Far, Malthos, far remove the sound of Erin's song. I rejoice not over the foe, when he ceases to lift the spear. With morning we pour our strength abroad. Fingal is wakened on his echoing hill.

Like waves, blown back by sudden winds, Erin retired, at the voice of the king. Deep-rolled into the field of night, they spread their humming tribes. Beneath his own tree, at intervals, each (2) bard sat down with his

during the invasion of Swatan. The indecent joy, which Borbar-duthul expressed, upon the death of Calmar, is well suited with that spirit of revenge, which subsisted, universally, in every country where the feudal system was established. — It would appear that some person had carried to Borbar-duthul that weapon, with which, it was pretended, Calmar had been killed.

(1) *The voices of Erin*, a poetical expression for the bards of Ireland.

(2) Not only the kings, but every petty chief,

harp. They raised the song, and touched the string : each to the chief he loved.—

had their bards attending them, in the field, in the days of Ossian ; and these bards, in proportion to the power of the chiefs, who retained them, had a number of inferior bards in their train. Upon solemn occasions, all the bards, in the army, would join in one chorus ; either when they celebrated their victories, or lamented the death of a person, worthy and renowned, slain in the war. The words were of the composition of the archbard, retained by the king himself, who generally attained to that high office on account of his superior genius for poetry. As the persons of the bards were sacred, and the emoluments of their office considerable, the order, in succeeding times, became very numerous and insolent. It would appear, that, after the introduction of Christianity, some served in the double capacity of bards and clergymen. It was, from this circumstance, that they had the name of *Chlere*, which is, probably, derived from the latin *Clericus*. The *Chlere*, be their name derived from what it will, became, at last, a public nuisance ; for, taking advantage of their sacred character, they went about, in great bodies, and lived, at discretion, in the houses of the chiefs ; till another party, of the same order, drove them away by mere dint of satire. Some of the indelicate disputes of these worthy poetical combatants are handed down, by tradition, and shew how much the bards, at last, abused the privileges, which the admiration of their countrymen had conferred on the order.—It was this insolent behaviour that induced the chiefs to retrench their number, and to take away those privileges which they were no longer worthy to enjoy. Their indolence, and disposition to lampoon, extinguished all the

Before a burning oak Sul-malla touched, at times, the harp. She touched the harp, and heard, between, the breezes in her hair. — In darkness near, lay the king of Atha, beneath an aged tree. The beam of the oak was turned from him; he saw the maid, but was not seen. His soul poured forth, in secret, when he beheld her tearful eye. — But battle is before thee, son of Borbar-duthul.

Amidst the harp, at intervals, she listened whether the warriors slept. Her soul was up; she longed, in secret, to pour her own sad song. — The field is silent. On their wings, the blasts of night retire. The bards had ceased; and meteors came; red-winding with their ghosts. — The sky grew dark: the forms of the dead were blended with the clouds. But heedless bends the daughter of Connor, over the decaying flame. Thou wert alone in her soul, car-borne chief of Atha. She raised the voice of the song, and touched the harp between.

(1) Clun-galo came; she missed the maid.

poetical fervour, which distinguished their predecessors, and makes us the less regret the extinction of the order.

(1) Clun-galo, *white knee*, the wife of Connor, king of Inis-huna, and the mother of Sul-malla.

—Where

BOOK VI. AN EPIC POEM. 185

—Where art thou, beam of light? Hunters,
from the mossy rock, saw you the blue-
eyed fair? — Are her steps on grassy Lu-
mon; near the bed of roes? — Ah me! I
behold her bow in the hall. Where art thou,
beam of light?

(1) Cease, love of Conmor, cease; I hear
thee not on the ridgy heath. My eye is turn-
ed to the king, whose path is terrible in
war. He for whom my soul is up, in the
season of my rest. — Deep-bosomed in war
he stands, he beholds me not from his
cloud. — Why, sun of Sul-malla, dost thou
not look forth? I dwell in darkness here;
wide over me flies the shadowy mist. Filled
with dew are my locks: look thou from
thy cloud, O sun of Sul-malla's soul. —

She is here represented, as missing her daughter;
after she had fled with Cathmor. This song is very
beautiful in the original. The expressive cadences
of the measure are inimitably suited to the situation
of the mind of Sul-malla.

(1) Sul-malla replies to the supposed questions of
her mother. Towards the middle of this paragraph
she calls Cathmor *the sun of her soul*, and conti-
nues the metaphor throughout. Those who deliver
this song down by tradition, say that there is a
part of the original lost. — This book ends, we
may suppose, about the middle of the third night,
from the opening of the poem.

VOL. III.

K

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
 LIBRARY
 540 EAST 57TH STREET
 CHICAGO, ILL. 60637

.....

TEMORA:

AN

EPIC POEM.

BOOK SEVENTH.

ARGUMENT to BOOK VII.

This book begins, about the middle of the third night from the opening of the poem. The poet describes a kind of mist, which rose, by night, from the lake of Lego, and was the usual residence of the souls of the dead, during the interval between their decease and the funeral song. The appearance of the ghost of Fillan above the cave where his body lay. His voice comes to Fingal, on the rock of Cormul. The king strikes the shield of Trenmor, which was an infallible sign of his appearing in arms himself. The extraordinary effect of the sound of the shield, Sul-malla, starting from sleep, awakes Cathmor. Their affecting discourse. She insists with him, to sue for peace; he resolves to continue the war. He directs her to retire to the neighbouring valley of Lona, which was the residence of an old Druid, until the battle of the next day should be over. He awakes his army with the sound of his shield. The shield described, Fonar, the bard, at the desire of Cathmor, relates the first settlement of the Firbolg in Ireland, under their leader Larthon, Morning comes, Sul-malla retires to the valley of Lona, A Lyric song concludes the book.

T E M O R A:

A N

EPIC POEM.

B O O K S E V E N T H.

(1) **F**ROM the wood-skirted waters of Lego,
ascend, at times, grey-bosomed mists, when
the gates of the west are closed on the sun's

(1) No poet departs less from his subject than Ossian. No far-fetched ornaments are introduced; the episodes rise from, and are indeed essential to, the story of the poem. Even his lyric songs, where he most indulges the extravagance of fancy, naturally spring from his subject. Their propriety and connection with the rest of the poem, shew that the Celtic bard was guided by judgment, amidst the wildest flights of imagination. It is a common supposition among mankind, that a genius for poetry and sound sense seldom center in the same person. The observation is far from being just; for true genius and judgment must be inseparable. The wild flights of fancy, without the guidance of judgment, are, as Horace observes, like the dreams of a sick man, irksome and confused. Fools can never write good poems. A warm imagination, it is true, domineers over a common portion of sense; and hence it is that so few have succeeded in the poetical way. But when an uncommon strength of judgment, and a glowing fancy, are properly tem-

eagle-eye. Wide, over Lara's stream, is poured the vapour dark and deep: the moon,

pered together, they, and they only, produce genuine poetry.

The present book is not the least interesting part of Temora. The awful images, with which it opens, are calculated to prepare the mind for the solemn scenes which are to follow. Ossian, always, throws an air of consequence on every circumstance which relates to Fingal. The very sound of his shield produces extraordinary effects; and these are heightened, one above another, in a beautiful climax. The distress of Sul-malla, and her conference with Cathmor, are very affecting. The description of his shield is a curious piece of antiquity; and is a proof of the early knowledge of navigation among the inhabitants of Britain and Ireland. Ossian, in short, throughout this book, is often sublime, and always pathetic.

Lego, so often mentioned by Ossian, was a lake, in Connaught, in which the river Lara emptied itself. On the banks of this lake dwelt Branno, the father-in-law of Ossian, whom the poet often visited before and after the death of Evir-allin. This circumstance, perhaps, occasioned the partiality, with which he always mentions Leigo and Lara; and accounts for his drawing so many of his images from them. The signification of Leigo, is, *the lake of disease*, probably so called, on account of the morasses which surrounded it.

As the mist, which rose from the lake of Leigo, occasioned diseases and death, the bards feigned, as here, that it was the residence of the ghosts of

BOOK VII. AN EPIC POEM. 171

like a dim shield, is swimming thro' its folds. With this, clothe the spirits of old their sudden gestures on the wind, when they stride, from blast to blast, along the dusky face of the night. Often, blended with the gale, to some warrior's grave, they roll the mist, a grey dwelling to his ghost, until the songs arise.

A sound came from the desert; the rushing course of Conar in winds. He poured his deep mist on Fillan, at blue-winding Lubar.—Dark and mournful sat the ghost, bending in his grey ridge of smoak. The blast, at times, rolled him together: but the lovely form returned again. It returned with slow-bending eyes: and dark winding of locks of mist.

the deceased, during the interval between their death and the pronouncing of the funeral elegy over their tombs; for it was not allowable, without that ceremony was performed, for the spirits of the dead to mix with their ancestors, *in their airy halls*. It was the business of the spirit of the nearest relation to the deceased, to take the mist of Lego, and pour it over the grave. We find here Conar, the son of Trenmor, the first king of Ireland, according to Ossian, performing this office for Fillan, as it was in the cause of the family of Conar, that that hero was killed. The description of the appearance of the ghost is picturesque and solemn, imposing a still attention to the speech that follows it, which, with great propriety, is short and awful,

It is (1) dark. The sleeping host were still, in the skirts of night. The flame decayed, on the hill of Fingal ; the king lay lonely on his shield. His eyes were half-closed in sleep ; the voice of Fillan came. « Sleeps the husband of Clatho ? Dwells the father of the fallen in rest ? Am I forgot in the folds of darkness ; lonely in the season of dreams ? »

(1) It has been observed, that Ossian takes great delight in describing night-scenes. This, in some measure, is to be attributed to his melancholy disposition, which delighted to dwell upon solemn objects. Even other poets, of a less serious turn than Ossian, have best succeeded in descriptions of this sort. Solemn scenes make the most lasting impressions on the imagination ; gay and light objects only touch the surface of the soul, and vanish. The human mind is naturally serious : levity and cheerfulness may be amiable, but they are too often the characteristics of weakness of judgment, and a deplorable shallowness of soul. — The night-descriptions of Ossian were in high repute among succeeding bards. One of them delivered a sentiment, in a distich, more favourable to his taste for poetry, than to his gallantry towards the ladies. I shall here give a translation of it.

« More pleasant to me is the night of Cona,
dark-streaming from Ossian's harp ; more pleasant
it is to me, than a white-bosomed dweller between
my arms ; than a fair-handed daughter of heroes, in
the hour of rest. »

Tho' tradition is not very satisfactory concerning the history of this poet, it has taken care to inform us, that he was *very old* when he wrote the distich. He lived (in what age is uncertain) in one

BOOK VII. AN EPIC POEM. 173

Why art thou in the midst of my dreams?
said Fingal, as, sudden, he rose. Can I
forget thee, my son, or thy path of fire in
the field? Not such, on the soul of the king,
come the deeds of the mighty in arms. They
are not there a beam of lightening, which
is seen, and is then no more. — I remember
thee, O Fillan, and my wrath begins to
rise.

The king took his deathful spear, and
struck the deeply-sounding shield: his shield
(1) that hung high in night, the dismal sign

of the western isles, and his name was Turloch
Ciabh-glas, or *Turloch of the grey locks*.

(1) Succeeding bards have recorded many fables,
concerning this wonderful shield. They say, that
Fingal, in one of his expeditions into Scandinavia,
met, in one of the Islands of Juteland, with
Luno, a celebrated magician. This Luno was the
Vulcan of the north, and had made compleat
suits of armour for many of the heroes of Scan-
dinavia. One disagreeable circumstance was, that
every person who wanted to employ Luno to make
armour for him, was obliged to overcome him,
at his own magic art. — Fingal, unskilled in spells
or enchantments, effected with dint of prowess,
what others failed in, with all their supernatural
art. When Luno demanded a trial of skill from
Fingal, the king drew his sword, cut off the skirts
of the magician's robe, and obliged him, bated as
he was, to fly before him. Fingal pursued, but Luno,
coming to the sea, by his magic art, walked upon
the waves. Fingal pursued him in his ship, and,

of war ! — Ghosts fled on every side , and rolled their gathered forms on the wind. — Thrice from the winding vale arose the voices of death. The harps (1) of the bards , untouched , sound mournful over the hill.

He struck again the shield : battles rose in the dreams of his host. The wide-rumbling strife is gleaming over their souls. Blue-shielded kings descend to war. Backward-looking armies fly ; and mighty deeds are half-hid , in the bright gleams of steel.

after a chace of ten days , came up with him , in the isle of Sky , and obliged him to erect a furnace , and make him this shield , and his famous sword , poetically called , *the son of Luno*. — Such are the strange fictions which the modern Scotch and Irish bards have formed on the original of Ossian.

(1) It was the opinion of the times , that , on the night preceding the death of a person worthy and renowned , the harps of those bards , who were retained by his family , emitted melancholy sounds. This was attributed , to use Ossian's expression , to *the light touch of ghosts* ; who were supposed to have a fore-knowledge of events. The same opinion prevailed long in the north , and the particular sound was called , *the warning voice of the dead*. *The voice of deaths* , mentioned in the preceding sentence , was of a different kind. Each person was supposed to have an attendant spirit , who assumed his form and voice , on the night preceding his death , and appeared , to some , in the attitude , in which the person was to die. THE VOICES OF DEATH were the foreboding shrieks of those spirits.

BOOK VII. AN EPIC POEM. 175

But when the third sound arose ; deer started from the clefts of their rocks. The screams of fowl are heard , in the desert , as each flew , frightened , on his blast.—The sons of Albion half-rose , and half-assumed their spears.—But silence rolled back on the host : they knew the shield of the king. Sleep returned to their eyes : the field was dark and still.

(1) No sleep was thine in darkness, blue-eyed daughter of Connor ! Sul-malla heard

(1) A bard , several ages more modern than Ossian , was so sensible of the beauty of this passage , as to give a close imitation of it , in a poem , concerning the great actions of Keneth Mac-Alpin , king of Scotland , against the Picts. As the poem is long , I shall only give here the story of it , with a translation of that paragraph , which bears the nearest resemblance to the passage of Temora just now before me. When Keneth was making preparations for that war , which terminated in the subversion of the Pictish kingdom , Flathal , his sister , had demanded permission from him , of attending him in the expedition ; in order to have a share in revenging the death of her father Alpin , who had been barbarously murdered by the Picts. The king , tho' he , perhaps , approved of the gallant disposition of his sister , refused , on account of her sex , to grant her request. The heroine , however , dressed herself in the habit of a young warrior ; and , in that disguise , attended the army , and performed many gallant exploits. On the night preceding the final overthrow of the Picts , Keneth , as was the custom among the kings of Scots , retired to a hill , without the verge of the

276 TEMORA: BOOK VII.

the dreadful shield, and rose, amidst the night.—Her steps are towards the king of Atha.—Can danger shake his daring soul! In doubt, she stands, with bending eyes. Heaven burns with all its stars.

Again the shield resounds! — She rushed.
—She stopt. — Her voice half-rose. It failed.

camp, to meditate on the dispositions he was to make in the approaching battle. Flathal, who was anxious about the safety of her brother, went, privately, to the top of an adjoining rock, and kept watch there to prevent his being surprized by the enemy. — Kenneth fell asleep, in his arms; and Flathal observed a body of the Picts surrounding the hill, whereon the king lay. — The sequel of the story may be gathered from the words of the bard.

» Her eyes, like stars, roll over the plain. She trembled for Alpin's race. She saw the gleaming foe. Her steps arose: she stopt. — « Why should he know of Flathal? he the king of men! — But hark! the sound is high — It is but the wind of night, lone-whistling in my locks. — I hear the echoing shields! » — Her spear fell from her hand. The lofty rock resounds. — He rose, a gathered cloud.

» Who wakes Conad of Albion, in the midst of his secret hill? I heard the soft voice of Flathal. Why, maid, dost thou shine in war? The daughters roll their blue eyes, by the streams. No field of blood is theirs.

» Alpin of Albion was mine, the father of Flathal of harps. He is low, mighty Conad, and my

BOOK VII. AN EPIC POEM. 177

—She saw him, amidst his arms, that gleamed to heaven's fire. She saw him dim in his locks, that rose to nightly wind. — Away, for fear, she turned her steps. — «Why should the king of Erin awake? Thou art not a dream to his rest, daughter of Inis-huna.»

More dreadful rung the shield. Sul-malla starts. Her helmet falls. Loud-echoed Lubar's rock, as over it rolled the steel. — Bursting from the dreams of night, Cathmor half-rose, beneath his tree. He saw the form of the maid, above him, on the rock. A red star, with twinkling beam, looked down thro' her floating hair.

(1) Who comes thro' night to Cathmor, in

soul is fire. Could Flathal, by the secret stream, behold the blood of her foes? I am a young eagle, on Dura, king of Drumalbin of winds. » —

In the sequel of the piece, the bard does not imitate Ossian, and his poem is so much the worse for it. — Keneth, with his sister's assistance, forced his way thro' the advanced parties of the enemy, and rejoined his own army. The bard has given a catalogue of the Scotch tribes, as they marched to battle; but, as he did not live near the time of Keneth, his accounts are to be little depended on.

(1) The rapid manner of Ossian does not often allow him to mark the speeches with the names of the persons who speak them. To prevent the obscurity, which this might occasion, I have, sometimes, used the freedom to do it in the translation. In the

the dark season of his dreams ? Bring'st thou ought of war ? Who art thou, son of night ? — Stand'st thou before me, a form of the times of old ? A voice from the fold of a cloud, to warn me of Erin's danger ?

Nor traveller of night am I, nor voice from folded cloud : but I warn thee of the danger of Erin. Dost thou hear that sound ? It is not the feeble, king of Atha, that rolls his signs on night.

Let the warrior roll his signs ; to Cathmor they are the sound of harps. My joy is great, voice of night, and burns over all my thoughts. This is the music of kings, on lonely hills, by night ; when they light their daring souls, the sons of mighty deeds ! The feeble dwell alone in the valley of the breeze ; where mists lift their morning skirts, from the blue-winding streams.

Not feeble, thou leader of heroes, were they, the fathers of my race. They dwelt in the darkness of battle ; in their distant lands. Yet delights not my soul, in the signs of death ! — He, (1) who never yields, comes forth : Awake the bard of peace !

present dialogue between Cathmor and Sul-malla, the speeches are so much marked with the characters of the speakers, that no interpolation is necessary to distinguish them from one another.

(1) Fingal is said to have never been overcome in

BOOK VII. AN EPIC POEM. 179

Like a rock with its trickling waters,
stood Cathmor in his tears. Her voice came,
a breeze, on his soul, and waked the me-
mory of her land; where she dwelt by her
peaceful streams, before he came to the war
of Connor.

Daughter of strangers, he said, (she trem-
bling turned away) long have I marked in
her armour, the young pine of Inis-huna.
—But my soul, I said, is folded in a storm.
Why should that beam arise, till my steps
return in peace? Have I been pale in thy
presence, when thou bidst me to fear the
king? — The time of danger, O maid, is
the season of my soul; for then it swells,
a mighty stream, and rolls me on the foe.

Beneath the moss-covered rock of Lona;
near his own winding stream; grey in his
locks of age, dwells Clonmal (1) king of

battle. From this proceeded that title of honour which
is always bestowed on him in tradition, *Fion-ghal*
na buai, FINGAL OF VICTORIES. In a poem, just
now in my hands, which celebrates some of the
great actions of Arthur the famous British hero,
that appellation is often bestowed on him. — The
poem, from the phraseology, appears to be ancient;
and is, perhaps, tho' that is not mentioned, a
translation from the Welsh language.

(1) Claon-mal, *crooked eye-brow*. From the
retired life of this person, it appears, that he was

harps. Above him is his echoing oak, and the dun bounding of roes. The noise (1) of our strife reaches his ear, as he bends in the thoughts of years. There let thy rest be, Sul-malla, until our battle cease. Until I return, in my arms, from the skirts of the evening mist that rises, on Lona, round the dwelling of my love.

A light fell on the soul of the maid; it rose kindled before the king. She turned her face to Cathmor; her locks are struggling with winds. Sooner (2) shall the eagle of heaven

of the order of the Druids; which supposition is not, at all, invalidated by the appellation of *king of harps*, here bestowed on him; for all agree that the bards were of the number of the Druids originally.

(1) By this circumstance, the poet insinuates; that the valley of Lona was very near the field of battle. In this indirect manner of narration, consists the great difference between poetical and historical narration.

(2) In after ages, the allusions of the bards, to particular passages of the works of Ossian, were very numerous. I have met with a poem, which was writ three centuries ago, in which the bard recommends, to a lady of his own times, the behaviour of Sul-malla, in this place. The poem has little to recommend it, excepting the passage, of which I am to give a translation here. The bards, when they alluded to the works of Ossian, seem to have caught some portion of his fire: upon other occasions,

be torn, from the stream of his roaring wind,
 when he sees the dun prey, before him, the
 young sons of the bounding roe, than thou,
 O Cathmor, be turned from the strife of re-

their compositions are little more than a group of epithets reduced into measure. Only their poems, upon martial subjects, fall under this censure. Their love sonnets, and pastoral verses, are far from wanting their beauties; but a great deal of these depend upon a certain *curiosa felicitas* of expression in the original; so that they would appear greatly to their disadvantage in another language. What the modern bards are most insupportable in, are their nauseous panegyrics upon their patrons. We see, in them, a petty tyrant, whose name was never heard, beyond the contracted limits of his own valley, stalking forth in all the trappings of a finished hero. From their frequent allusions, however, to the entertainments which he gave, and the *strength of his cups*, we may easily guess from whence proceeded the praise of an indolent and effeminate race of men: for the bards, from the great court paid, originally, to their order, became, at last, the most flagitious and dispirited of all mortals. Their compositions, therefore, on this side of a certain period, are dull and trivial to the highest degree. By lavishing their praises upon unworthy objects, their panegyricks became common and little regarded; they were thrust out of the houses of the chiefs, and wandered about, from tribe to tribe, in the double capacity of poet and harper. Galled with this usage, they betook themselves to satire and lampoon, so that the compositions of the bards, for more than a century back, are almost altogether of the sarcaistical kind. In this they succeeded well; for as there is no language more copious than the Galic, so there is scarcely any equally adapted to those quaint turns of expression which belongs

noun.—Soon may I see thee, warrior, from the skirts of the evening mist, when it is rolled around me, on Lona of the streams. While yet thou art distant far, strike, Cathmor, strike the shield, that joy may return to my darkned soul, as I lean on the mossy rock. But if thou should fall—I am in the land of strangers;—O send thy voice, from thy cloud, to the maid of Inis-huna.

Young branch of green-headed Lumon; why dost thou shake in the storm? Often has Cathmor returned, from darkly-rolling wars. The darts of death are but hail to me; they

to satire. — Tho' the chiefs disregarded the lampoons of the bards, the vulgar, out of mere fear, received them into their habitations, entertained them, as well as their circumstances would allow, and kept existing, for some years, an order, which, by their own mismanagement, had deservedly fallen into contempt.

To return to the old poem, which gave occasion to this note. It is an address to the wife of a chief, upon the departure of her husband to war. The passage, which alludes to Sul-malla, is this:

« Why art thou mournful on rocks; or lifting thine eyes on waves? His ship has bounded towards battle. His joy is in the murmur of fields. Look to the beams of old, to the virgins of Ossian of harps. Sul-malla keeps not her eagle, from the field of blood. She would not tear her eagle, from the sounding course of renown. »

BOOK VII. AN EPIC POEM. 183

have often bounded from my shield. I have risen brightned from battle, like a meteor from a stormy cloud. Return not, fair beam, from thy vale, when the roar of battle grows. Then might the foe escape, as from my fathers of old.

They told to Son-mor (1), of Clunar (2), slain by Cormac the giver of shells. Three days darkned Son-mor, over his brother's fall. — His spouse beheld the silent king, and foresaw his steps to war. She prepared the bow, in secret, to attend her blue-shielded hero. To her dwelt darkness, at Atha, when the warrior moved to his fields. — From their hundred streams, by night, poured down the sons of Alnecma. They had heard the shield of the king, and their rage arose. In clanging arms, they moved along, towards

(1) Són-mor, *tall handsome man*. He was the father of Borbar-duthul, chief of Atha, and grandfather to Cathmor himself. The propriety of this episode is evident. But, tho' it appears here to be only introduced as an example to Sul-malla; the poet probably had another design in view, which was further to illustrate the antiquity of the quarrel between the Firbolg and Caél.

(2) Cluan-er, *man of the field*. This chief was killed in battle by Cormac Mac-Conar, king of Ireland, the father of Roscrana, the first wife of Fingal. The story is alluded to in other poems.

Ullin the land of groves. Son-mor struck his shield , at times , the leader of the war.

Far behind followed Sul-allin (1), over the streamy hills. She was a light on the mountain , when they crossed the vale below. Her steps were stately on the vale , when they rose on the mossy hill. — She feared to approach the king , who left her in Atha of hinds. But when the roar of battle rose ; when host was rolled on host ; when Son-mor burnt , like the fire of heaven in clouds , with her spreading hair came Sul-allin ; for she trembled for her king. — He stopt the rushing strife to save the love of heroes. — The foe fled by night ; Clunar slept without his blood ; the blood which ought to be poured upon the warrior's tomb.

Nor rose the rage of Son-mor , but his days were dark and slow. Sul-allin wandered , by her grey streams , with her tearful eyes. Often did she look , on the hero , when he was folded in his thoughts. But she shrunk from his eyes , and turned her lone steps away. — Battles rose , like a tempest , and drove the mist from his soul. He beheld , with joy , her steps in the hall , and the white rising of her hands on the harp.

(1) Suil-alluin , *beautiful eye* , the wife of Son-mor ,

BOOK VII. AN EPIC POEM. 185

(1) In his arms strode the chief of Atha, to where his shield hung, high, in night : high on a mossy bough , over Lubar's streamy roar. Seven bosses rose on the shield ; the seven voices of the king , which his warriors received , from the wind , and marked over all their tribes.

On each boss is placed a star of night ;
Canmathon with beams unshorn ; Col-derna

(1) The poet returns to his subject. The description of the shield of Cathmor is valuable , on account of the light it throws on the progress of arts in those early times. Those who draw their ideas of remote antiquity from their observations on the manners of modern savage nations , will have no high opinion of the workmanship of Cathmor's shield. To remove some part of their prejudice , I shall only observe , that the Belgæ of Britain , who were the ancestors of the Firbolg , were a commercial people ; and commerce , we might prove , from many shining examples of our own times , is the proper inlet of arts and sciences , and all that exalts the human mind. To avoid multiplying notes , I shall give here the signification of the names of the stars , engraved on the shield. Cean-mathon , *head of the bear*. Col-derna , *slant and sharp beam*. Ul-oicho , *ruler of night*. Cathlin , *beam of the wave*. Reul-durath , *star of the twilight*. Berthin , *fire of the hill*. Tonthéna , *meteor of the waves*. These etymologies , excepting that of Cean-mathon , are pretty exact. Of it I am not so certain ; for it is not very probable , that the Firbolg had distinguished a constellation , so very early as the days of Larthon , by the name of the bear.

rising from a cloud; Uloicho robed in mist; and the soft beam of Cathlin glittering on a rock. Fair-gleaming on its own blue wave, Reldurath half-sinks its western light. The red eye of Berthin looks, through a grove, on the slow-moving hunter, as he returns, through showery night, with the spoils of the bounding roe. — Wide, in the midst, arose the cloudless beams of Ton-théna; Ton-théna which looked, by night, on the course of the sea-tossed Larthon: Larthon, the first of Bolga's race, who travelled on the winds (1). — White-bosomed spread the sails of the king, towards streamy Inisfail; dun night was rolled before him, with its skirts of mist. The winds were changeful in heaven, and rolled him from wave to wave. — Then rose the fiery-haired Ton-théna, and laughed from her parted cloud. Larthon (2) rejoiced at the guiding beam, as it faintly gleamed on the tumbling waters.

(1) *To travel on the winds*, a poetical expression for sailing.

(2) Larthon is compounded of *Lear*, sea, and *thon*, wave. This name was given to the chief of the first colony of the Firbolg, who settled in Ireland, on account of his knowledge in navigation. A part of an old poem is still extant, concerning this hero. The author of it, probably, took the hint from the episode in this book, relating to the first discovery of Ireland by Larthon. It abounds with those romantic fables of giants and magicians, which

BOOK VII. AN EPIC POEM. 187

Beneath the spear of Cathmor, awaked
that voice which awakes the bards. They
came, dark-winding, from every side; each,
with the sound of his harp. Before them re-
joiced the king, as the traveller, in the day
of the sun; when he hears, far-rolling around,
the murmur of mossy streams; streams that
burst, in the desert, from the rock of roes.

distinguish the compositions of the less ancient bards. The descriptions, contained in it, are ingenious and proportionable to the magnitude of the persons introduced; but, being unnatural, they are insipid and tedious. Had the bard kept within the bounds of probability, his genius was far from being contemptible. The exordium of his poem is not destitute of merit; but it is the only part of it, that I think worthy of being presented to the reader.

“ Who first sent the black ship, thro’ ocean,
like a whale thro’ the bursting of foam? — Look,
from thy darkness, on Cronath, Ossian of the
harps of old! — Send thy light on the blue-rolling
waters, that I may behold the king. — I see him
dark in his own shell of oak! sea-rossed Lathon,
thy soul is fire. — It is careless as the wind of thy
sails; as the wave that rolls by thy side. But the silent
green isle is before thee, with its sons, who are tall
as woody Lumon; Lumon which sends, from its
top, a thousand streams, white-wandering down its
sides. —

It may, perhaps, be for the credit of this bard,
to translate no more of this poem, for the conti-
nuation of his description of the Irish giants betrays
his want of judgment.

Why, said Fonar, hear we the voice of the king, in the season of his rest? Were the dim forms of thy fathers bending in thy dreams? Perhaps they stand on that cloud, and wait for Fonar's song; often they come to the fields where their sons are to lift the spear. — Or shall our voice arise for him who lifts the spear no more; he that consumed the field, from Moma of the groves?

Not forgot is that cloud in war, bard of other times. High shall his tomb rise, on Moilena, the dwelling of renown. But, now, roll back my soul to the times of my fathers: to the years when first they rose, on Inis-huna's waves. Nor alone pleasant to Cathmor is the remembrance of wood-covered Lumon. — Lumon the land of streams, the dwelling of white-bosomed maids.

(1) Lumon of foamy streams, thou risest on Fonar's soul! Thy sun is on thy side, on the rocks of thy bending trees. The dun roe is

(1) Lumon, as I have remarked in a preceding note, was a hill, in Inis-huna, near the residence of Sul-malla. This episode has an immediate connection with what is said of Larthon, in the description of Cathmor's shield. We have there hinted to us only Larthon's first voyage to Ireland; here his story is related, at large, and a curious description of ship-building. This concise, but expressive, episode has been much admired in the original. Its brevity is remarkably suited to the hurry of the occasion.

seen

BOOK VII. AN EPIC POEM. 189

seen from thy furze; the deer lifts his branchy head; for he sees, at times, the hound, on the half-covered heath. Slow, on the vale, are the steps of maids, the white-armed daughters of the bow: they lift their blue eyes to the hill, from amidst their wandering locks. — Not there is the stride of Larthon, chief of Inishuna. He mounts the wave on his own dark oak, in Cluba's ridgy bay. That oak which he cut from Lumon, to bound along the sea. The maids turn their eyes away, lest the king should be lowly-laid; for never had they seen a ship, dark rider of the wave!

Now he dares to call the winds, and to mix with the mist of ocean. Blue Inis-fail rose, in smook; but dark-skirted night came down. The sons of Bolga feared. The fiery haired Ton-théna rose. Culbin's bay received the ship, in the bosom of its echoing woods. There, issued a stream, from Duthuma's horrid cave; where spirits gleamed, at times, with their half-finished forms.

Dreams descended on Larthon: he saw seven spirits of his fathers. He heard their half-formed words, and dimly beheld the times to come. He beheld the kings of Atha, the sons of future days. They led their hosts, along the field, like ridges of mist, which winds pour, in autumn, over Atha of the groves.

Larthon raised the hall of Samla (1), to the soft sound of the harp. He went forth to the roes of Erin, to their wonted streams. Nor did he forget green-headed Lumon; he often bounded over his seas, to where white-handed Flathal (2) looked from the hill of roes. Lumon of the foamy streams, thou risest on Fonar's soul.

The beam awaked in the east. The misty heads of the mountains rose. Valleys shew, on every side, the grey-winding of their streams. His host heard the shield of Cathmor: at once they rose around; like a crowded sea, when first it feels the wings of the wind. The waves know not whither to roll; they lift their troubled heads.

Sad and slow retired Sul-malla to Lona of the streams. She went — and often turned; her blue eyes rolled in tears. But when she came to the rock, that darkly-covered Lona's vale: she looked, from her bursting soul, on the king; and sunk, at once, behind.

(3) Son of Alpin, strike the string. Is there

(1) Samla, *apparitions*, so called from the vision of Larthon, concerning his posterity.

(2) Flathal, *heavenly, exquisitely beautiful*. She was the wife of Larthon.

(3) The original of this lyric ode is one of the most

BOOK VII. AN EPIC POEM. 191

ought of joy in the harp ? Pour it then, on the soul of Ossian : it is folded in mist. — I hear thee, O bard, in my night. But cease the lightly-trembling sound. The joy of grief belongs to Ossian, amidst his dark-brown years.

Green thorn of the hill of ghosts, that shakest thy head to nightly winds ! I hear no sound in thee ; is there no spirit's windy skirt now rustling in thy leaves ? Often are the steps of the dead, in the dark-eddying blasts ; when the moon, a dun shield, from the east, is rolled along the sky.

Ullin, Carril and Ryno, voices of the days of old ! Let me hear you, in the darkness of Selma, and awake the soul of songs. — I hear you not, ye children of music, in what hall of the clouds is your rest ? Do you touch the shadowy harp, robed with morning mist ; where the sun comes sounding forth from his green-headed waves ?

beautiful passages of the poem. The harmony and variety of its versification prove, that the knowledge of music was considerably advanced in the days of Ossian. See the specimen of the original.

Book VI. AN EPIGRAM.
The first of a series of epigrams on the
loss of China, a subject in which I have
been, O said, in my opinion, far more
likely to find some. The joy of grief
being in China, while his last days

Green from of the hill of stone, that
which the land to which I look I see as
if it were a land no more, and yet it is
now rather in the eyes; O then, how the
joy of the land in the land of the living
is not the same, a land which, from the west,
is not the same, a land which, from the west,
is not the same, a land which, from the west,

—The Green from the hill of stone, that
of which I see not you, in the darkness of
Siberia, and the land of the living, I hear
you not, the land of the living, and yet I see
of his mother's yearning, the mother of the
daddy, and the land of the living, and yet I see
of his mother's yearning, the mother of the
daddy, and the land of the living, and yet I see

beautiful, the land of the living, the land of the living,
of his mother's yearning, the mother of the
daddy, and the land of the living, and yet I see
of his mother's yearning, the mother of the
daddy, and the land of the living, and yet I see

TEMORA:

AN

EPIC POEM.

BOOK EIGHTH.

L 37

THE HISTORY OF THE

MEMOIRS

OF

THE

BOOK EIGHTH

17

ARGUMENT to BOOK VIII.

The fourth morning, from the opening of the poem, comes on. Fingal, still continuing in the place, to which he had retired on the preceding night, is seen, at intervals, thro' the mist, which covered the rock of Cormul. The descent of the king is described. He orders Gaul, Dermid, and Carril the bard, to go to the valley of Cluna, and conduct, from thence, to the Caledonian army, Ferad-artho, the son of Cairbre, the only person remaining of the family of Conar, the first king of Ireland. — The king takes the command of the army, and prepares for battle. Marching towards the enemy, he comes to the cave of Lubar, where the body of Fillan lay. Upon seeing his dog Bran, who lay at the entrance of the cave, his grief returns. — Cathmor arranges the army of the Fir-bolg in order of battle. The appearance of that hero. The general conflict is described. The actions of Fingal and Cathmor. A storm. The total rout of the Fir-bolg. The two kings engage, in a column of mist, on the banks of Lubar. Their attitude and conference after the combat. The death of Cathmor. — Fingal resigns the spear of Trenmor to Ossian. The ceremonies observed on that occasion. — The spirit of Cathmor appears to Sul-malla, in the

ARGUMENT to BOOK VIII.

valley of Lona. Her sorrow. — Evening comes on. A feast is prepared. — The coming of Ferad-artho is announced by the songs of a hundred bards. — The poem closes, with a speech of Fingal.

TEMORA:

AN

EPIC POEM.

BOOK EIGHTH.

(1) AS when the wintry winds have seized
the waves of the mountain-lake, have seized
them, in stormy night, and cloathed them
over with ice; white, to the hunter's early
eye, the billows still seem to roll. He turns
his ear to the sound of each unequal ridge.
But each is silent, gleaming, strewn with boughs

(1) In the course of my notes, I have made it more
my business to explain, than to examine, critically,
the works of Ossian. The first is my province, as the
person best acquainted with them, the second falls to
the share of others. I shall, however, observe, that
all the precepts, which Aristotle drew from Homer,
ought not to be applied to the composition of a Celtic
bard; nor ought the title of the latter to the *epopæa*
to be disputed, even if he should differ in some cir-
cumstances, from a Greek poet. — Some allowance
should be made for the different manners of nations.
The genius of the Greeks and Celts was extremely
dissimilar. The first were lively and loquacious; a
manly conciseness of expression distinguished the lat-
ter. We find, accordingly, that the compositions of
Homer and Ossian are marked with the general and

198 TEMORA: BOOK VIII.

and tufts of grass, which shake and whistle to the wind, over their grey seats of frost. — So silent shone to the morning the ridges of

opposite characters of their respective nations, and, consequently, it is improper to compare the *minutiae* of their poems together. There are, however, general rules, in the conduct of an epic poem, which, as they are natural, are, likewise, universal. In these the two poets exactly correspond. This similarity, which could not possibly proceed from imitation, is more decisive, with respect to the grand essentials of the *epopea*, than all the precepts of Aristotle.

Ossian is now approaching to the grand catastrophe. The preparations he has made, in the preceding book, properly introduce the magnificence of description, with which the present book opens, and tend to shew that the Celtic bard had more art, in working up his fable, than some of those, who closely imitated the model of Homer. The transition from the pathetic to the sublime is easy and natural. Till the mind is opened, by the first, it scarcely can have an adequate comprehension of the second. The soft and affecting scenes of the seventh book form a sort of contrast to, and consequently heighten, the features of the more grand and terrible images of the eighth.

The simile, with which this book opens, is, perhaps, the longest, and the most minutely descriptive, of any in the works of Ossian. The images of it are only familiar to those who live in a cold and mountainous country. They have often seen a lake suddenly frozen over, and strewed with withered grass, and boughs torn, by winds, from the mountains, which form its banks; but, I believe, few of them would be of the mind of the ancient

BOOK VIII. — AN EPIC POEM. 199

Morven's host, as each warrior looked up from his helmet towards the hill of the king; the cloud-covered hill of Fingal, where he strode,

bard, who preferred these winter scenes to the irri-
guous vales of May. — *To me, says he, bring
back my woods, which strew their leaves on blasts &
spread the lake below, with all its frozen waves.
Pleasant is the breeze on the bearded ice; when
the moon is broad in heaven, and the spirit of the
mountain roars. Roll away the green vales of May;
they are thoughts of maids, &c.* Such are the words
of this winter poet, but what he afterwards adds,
gives us to understand, that those frigid scenes were
not his sole delight: for he speaks, with great ten-
derness, of the *oak-lighted hall of the chief*; and
the *strength of the shells, at night, when the course
of winds is abroad.*

If the simile of a frozen lake aptly illustrates
the stillness and silent expectation of an army,
lying under arms, waiting for the coming of their
king, so the comparison of the sudden rising of
waves, around a spirit, is also very expressive of
the tumultuous joy of Fingal's army, upon the
appearance of that hero. — An ancient bard,
sensible of the beauty of this passage, has happily
imitated it, in a poem, concerning Kenneth Mac
Alpin, king of Scotland. — I had occasion to
quote this piece, in a note in the preceding book.
Kenneth had retired privately, by night, to a hill,
in the neighbourhood of his army, and, upon
his return, next morning, the bard says, *that he
was like the form of a spirit, returning to his secret
bay. In the skirts of a blast he stands. The waves
lift their roaring heads. Their green backs are qui-
vering round. Rocks eccho back their joy.*

in the rolling of mist. At times is the hero seen, greatly dim in all his arms. From thought to thought rolled the war, along his mighty soul.

Now is the coming forth of the king: — First appeared the sword of Luno; the spear half issuing from a cloud, the shield still dim in mist. But when the stride of the king came abroad, with all his grey, dewy locks in the wind; then rose the shouts of his host over every moving tribe. They gathered, gleaming, round, with all their echoing shields. So rise the green seas round a spirit, that comes down from the squally wind. The traveller hears the sound afar, and lifts his head over the rock. He looks on the troubled bay, and thinks he dimly sees the form. The waves sport, unwieldily, round, with all their backs of foam.

Far-distant stood the son of Morni, Duthno's race, and Cona's bard. We stood far-distant; each beneath his tree. We shuned the eyes of the king; we had not conquered in the field. — A little stream rolled at my feet: I touched its light wave, with my spear. I touched it with my spear; nor there was the soul of Ossian. It darkly rose, from thought to thought, and sent abroad the sigh.

Son of Morni, said the king, Dermid, hun-

BOOK VIII. AN EPIC POEM. 161

ter of roes ! why are ye dark , like two rocks ,
each with its trickling waters ? No wrath ga-
thers on the soul of Fingal , against the chiefs
of men . Ye are my strength in battle ; the
kindling of my joy in peace . My early voice
was a pleasant gale to your ears , when Fillan
prepared the bow . The son of Fingal is not
here , nor yet the chace of the bounding roes .
But why should the breakers of shields stand ,
darkened , far away ?

Tall they strode towards the king ; they
saw him turned to Mora's wind . His tears
came down , for his blue-eyed son , who
slept in the cave of streams . But he brightened
before them , and spoke to the broad-shielded
kings .

Crommal , with woody rocks , and misty
top , the field of winds , pours forth , to the
fight , blue Lubar's streamy roar . Behind it
rolls clear-winding Lavath , in the still vale of
deer . A cave is dark in a rock ; above it strong-
winged eagles dwell ; broad-headed oaks ,
before it , sound in Cluna's wind . Within
in his locks of youth , is Ferad-artho (1) ,

(1) Ferad-artho was the son of Cairbar Mac-Cor-
mac king of Ireland . He was the only one remain-
ing of the race of Conar , the son of Trenmor ,
the first Irish monarch , according to Ossian . In
order to make this passage thoroughly understood ,
it may not be improper to recapitulate some part

blue-eyed king, the son of broad-shielded Cairbar, from Ullin of the roes. He listens to the voice of Condan, as, grey, he bends

of what has been said in preceding notes. — Upon the death of Conar the son of Trenmor, his son Cormac succeeded on the Irish throne. Cormac reigned long. His children were, Cairbar, who succeeded him, and Roscrana, the first wife of Fingal. Cairbar, long before the death of his father Cormac, had taken to wife Bos-gala, the daughter of Colgar, one of the most powerful chiefs in Connaught, and had, by her, Artho, afterwards king of Ireland. Soon after Artho arrived at man's estate, his mother Bos-gala died, and Cairbar took to wife Beltanno, the daughter of Conachar of Ullin, who brought him a son, whom he called Ferad-artho, i. e. *a man in the place of Artho*. The occasion of the name was this. Artho, when his brother was born, was absent, on an expedition in the south of Ireland. A false report was brought to his father that he was killed. — Cairbar, to use the words of the poem on the subject, *darkened for his fair-haired son. He turned to the young beam of light, the son of Beltanno of Conachar. Thou shalt be Ferad-artho, he said, a fire before thy race*. Cairbar, soon after, died, nor did Artho long survive him. Artho was succeeded, in the Irish throne, by his son Cormac, who in his minority, was murdered by Cairbar, the son of Borbar-duthul. — Ferad-artho, says tradition, was very young, when the expedition of Fingal, to settle him on the throne of Ireland, happened. During the short reign of young Cormac, Ferad-artho lived at the royal palace of Temora. Upon the murder of the king, Condan, the bard, conveyed Ferad-artho, privately, to the cave of Cluna, behind the mountain Crommal, in Ulster,

BOOK VIII. AN EPIC POEM. 205

in feeble light. He listens, for his foes dwell in the echoing halls of Temora. He comes, at times, abroad, in the skirts of mist, to pierce the bounding roes. When the sun looks on the field, nor by the rock, nor stream, is he ! He shuns the race of Bolga, who dwell in his father's hall. Tell him, that Fingal lifts the spear, and that his foes, perhaps, may fail.

Lift up, O Gaul, the shield before him ! Stretch, Dermid, Temora's spear. Be thy voice in his ear, O Carril, with the deeds of his fathers. Lead him to green Moilena,

where they both lived concealed, during the usurpation of the family of Atha. All these particulars, concerning Ferad-artho, may be gathered from the compositions of Ossian : A bard, lest ancient, has delivered the whole history, in a poem just now in my possession. It has little merit, if we except the scene between Ferad-artho, and the messengers of Fingal, upon their arrival, in the valley of Cluna. After hearing of the great actions of Fingal, the young prince proposes the following questions concerning him, to Gaul and Dermid. — « Is the king tall as the rock of my cave ? Is his spear a fir of Cluna ? Is he a rough-winged blast, on the mountain, which takes the green oak by the head, and tears it from its hill ? — Glitters Lubar within his strides, when he sends his stately steps along ? — Nor is he tall, said Gaul, as that rock : nor glitter streams within his strides, but his soul is a mighty flood, like the strength of Ullin's seas. »

to the dusky field of ghosts; for there I fall forward, in battle, in the folds of war. Before dun night descends, come to high Dunmora's top. Look, from the grey rolling of mist, on Lena of the streams. If there my standard shall float on wind, over Lubar's gleaming course, then has not Fingal failed in the last of his fields.

Such were his words: nor aught replied the silent, striding kings. They looked side-long, on Erin's host, and darkened, as they went. — Never before had they left the king, in the midst of the stormy field. — Behind them, touching at times his harp, the grey-haired Carril moved. He foresaw the fall of the people, and mournful was the sound! — It was like a breeze that comes, by fits, over Lego's reedy lake; when sleep half-descends on the hunter, within his mossy cave.

Why bends the bard of Cona, said Fingal, over his secret stream? — Is this a time for sorrow, father of low-laid Oscar? Be the warriors (1) remembered in peace; when

(1) Oscar and Fillan are here, emphatically called *the warriors*. Ossian was not forgetful of them, when, to use his own expression, *peace returned to the land*. His plaintive poems, concerning the death of these young heroes, were very numerous. I had occasion, in a preceding note, to give a translation of one of them, (a dialogue between Clathor

BOOK VIII. AN EPIC POEM. 205

echoing shields are heard no more. Bend, then, in grief, over the flood, where blows the mountain breeze. Let them pass on thy

and Bos-mina) in this I shall lay before the reader a fragment of another. The greatest, and, perhaps, the most interesting part of the poem, is lost. What remains, is a soliloquy of Malvina; the daughter of Toscar, so often mentioned in Ossian's compositions. She sitting alone, in the vale of Moi-lutha, is represented as descrying, at a distance, the ship which carried the body of Oscar to Morven.

« Malvina is like the bow of the shower, in the secret valley of streams; it is bright, but the drops of heaven roll on its blended light. They say, that I am fair within my locks, but, on my brightness, is the wandering of tears. Darkness flies over my soul, as the dusky wave of the breeze, along the grass of Lutha. — Yet have not the roes failed me, when I moved between the hills. Pleasant, beneath my white hand, arose the sound of harps. What then, daughter of Lutha, travels over thy soul, like the dreary path of a ghost, along the nightly beam? — Should the young warrior fall, in the roar of his troubled fields! — Young virgins of Lutha arise, call back the wandering thoughts of Malvina. Awake the voice of the harp, along my echoing vale. Then shall my soul come forth, like a light from the gates of the morn, when clouds are rolled around them, with their broken sides.

« Dweller of my thoughts, by night, whose form ascends in troubled fields, why dost thou stir up my soul, thou far-distant son of the king? — Is

soul, the blue-eyed dwellers of Lena. —
But Erin rolls to war, wide-tumbling, rough,
and dark. Lift, Ossian, lift the shield. — I
am alone, my son!

As comes the sudden voice of winds to the
becalmed ship of Inis-huna, and drives it large,
along the deep, dark rider of the wave : so
the voice of Fingal sent Ossian, tall, along
the heath. He lifted high his shining shield,
in the dusky wing of war : like the broad,
blank moon, in the skirt of a cloud, before
the storms arise.

Loud, from moss-covered Mora, poured
down, at once, the broad-winged war. Fingal
led his people forth, king of Morven of
streams. — On high spreads the eagle's wing.
His grey hair is poured on his shoulders
broad. In thunder are his mighty strides. He
often stood, and saw behind, the wide-
gleaming rolling of armour. — A rock he
seemed, grey over with ice, whose woods
are high in wind. Bright streams leap from
its head, and spread their foam on blasts.

that the ship of my love, its dark course thro' the
ridges of ocean? How art thou so sudden, Oscar,
from the heath of shields? —

The rest of this poem, it is said, consisted, of
a dialogue between Ullin and Malvina, wherein the
distress of the latter is carried to the highest pitch.

Now he came to Lubar's cave, where Fillan darkly slept. Bran still lay on the broken shield : the eagle-wing is strewed on winds. Bright, from withered furze, looked forth the hero's spear. — Then grief stirred the soul of the king, like whirlwinds blackening on a lake. He turned his sudden step, and leaned on his bending spear.

White-breasted Bran came bounding with joy to the known path of Fingal. He came, and looked towards the cave, where the blue-eyed hunter lay, for he was wont to stride, with morning, to the dewy bed of the roe. — It was then the tears of the king came down, and all his soul was dark. — But as the rising wind rolls away the storm of rain, and leaves the white streams to the sun, and high hills with their heads of grass; so the returning war brightened the mind of Fingal. He bounded (1), on his spear, over Lubar, and

(1) The poetical hyperboles of Ossian were; afterwards, taken in the literal sense, by the ignorant vulgar; and they firmly believed, that Fingal, and his heroes, were of a gigantic stature. There are many extravagant fictions founded upon the circumstance of Fingal leaping at once over the river Lubar. Many of them are handed down in tradition. The Irish compositions concerning Fingal invariably speak of him as a giant. Of these Hibernian poems there are now many in my hands. From the language, and allusions to the times in which they were writ, I should fix the date of

struck his echoing shield. His ridgy host
bend forward, at once, with all their pointed
steel.

Nor Erin heard, with fear, the sound:

their composition in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In some passages, the poetry is far from wanting merit, but the fable is unnatural, and the whole conduct of the pieces injudicious. I shall give one instance of the extravagant fictions of the Irish bards, in a poem which they, most unjustly, ascribe to Ossian. The story of it is this. — Ireland being threatened with an invasion from some part of Scandinavia, Fingal sent Ossian, Oscar and Ca-olt, to watch the bay, in which it was expected, the enemy was to land. Oscar, unluckily, fell asleep, before the Scandinavians appeared; and, great as he was, says the Irish bard, he had one bad property, that no less could waken him, before his time, than cutting off one of his fingers, or throwing a great stone against his head; and it was dangerous to come near him on those occasions, till he had recovered himself, and was fully awake. Ca-olt, who was employed by Ossian to waken his son, made choice of throwing the stone against his head, as the least dangerous expedient. The stone, rebounding from the hero's head, shook, as it rolled along, the hill for three miles round. Oscar rose in rage, fought bravely, and, singly, vanquished a wing of the enemy's army. — Thus the bard goes on till Fingal put an end to the war, by the total rout of the Scandinavians. Puerile, and even despicable, as these fictions are, yet Keating and O'Flaherty have no better authority than the poems which contain them, for all that they write concerning Fion Mac-comnal, and the pretended militia of Ireland.

BOOK VIII. AN EPIC POEM. 169

wide they came rolling along. Dark Malthos, in the wing of war, looks forward from shaggy brows. Next rose that beam of light Hidalla; then the side-long-looking gloom of Maronnan. Blue shielded Clonar lifts the spear; Cormar shakes his bushy locks on the wind. — Slowly, from behind a rock, rose the bright form of Atha. First appeared his two pointed spears, then the half of his burnished shield like the rising of a nightly meteor, over the vale of ghosts. But when he shone all abroad, the hosts plunged, at once, into strife. The gleaming waves of steel are poured on either side.

As meet two troubled seas, with the rolling of all their waves, when they feel the wings of contending winds, in the rock-sided firth of Lumon; along the echoing hills is the dim course of ghosts: from the blast fall the torn groves on the deep, amidst the foamy path of whales. — So mixed the hosts! — Now Fingal; now Cathmor came abroad. — The dark tumbling of death is before them: the gleam of broken steel is rolled on their steps, as, loud, the high-bounding kings hewed down the ridge of shields.

Maronnan fell, by Fingal, laid large across a stream. The waters gathered by his side, and leapt grey over his bossy shield. — Clonar is pierced by Cathmor: nor yet lay the chief

216 TEMORA: BOOK VIII.

on earth. An oak seized his hair in his fall. His helmet rolled on the ground. By its thong, hung his broad shield; over it wandered his streaming blood. Tla-min (1) shall weep, in the hall, and strike her heaving breast.

(1) Tla-min, *mildly-sofi*. The loves of Clonar and Tla-min were rendered famous in the north, by a fragment of a Lyric poem, still preserved, which is ascribed to Ossian. Be it the composition of whom it will, its poetical merit may, perhaps, excuse me, for inserting it here. It is a dialogue between Clonar and Tla-min. She begins with a soliloquy, which he overhears.

“ Clonar, son of Conglas of I-mor, young hunter of dun-sided roes! where art thou laid, amidst rushes, beneath the passing wing of the breeze? — I behold thee, my love, in the plain of thy own dark streams! The clung thorn is rolled by the wind, and rustles along his shield. Bright in his locks he lies: the thoughts of his dreams fly, darkening, over his face. Thou thinkest of the battles of Ossian, young son of the echoing isle!

“ Half-hid, in the grove, I sit down. Fly back, ye mists of the hill. Why should ye hide her love from the blue eyes of Tla-min of harps?

CLONAR.

“ As the spirit, seen in a dream, flies off from our opening eyes, we think, we behold his bright path between the closing hills; so fled the daughter of Clun-gal, from the sight of Clonar of shields. Arise, from the gathering of trees; blue-eyed Tla-min arise,

BOOK VIII. AN EPIC POEM. 317

Nor did Ossian forget the spear, in the wing of his war. He strewed the field with dead. — Young Hidalla came. Soft voice of streamy Clonra ! Why dost thou lift the steel ? — O that we met, in the strife of song, in thy own rushy vale ! — Malthos beheld him low, and darkened as he rushed along. On either side of a stream, we bend in the echoing strife. — Heaven comes rolling down : around burst the voices of squally winds. — Hills are clothed, at times, in fire. Thunder rolls in wreaths of mist. — In darkness shrunk the foe : Morven's warriors stood aghast. — Still I bent over the stream, amidst my whistling locks.

T L A - M I N.

“ I turn me away from his steps. Why should he know of my love ! My white breast is heaving over sighs, as foam on the dark course of streams. — But he passes away, in his arms ! — Son of Conglas, my soul is sad.

C L O N A R.

“ It was the shield of Fingal ! the voice of kings from Selma of harps ! — My path is towards green Erin. Arise, fair light, from thy shades. Come to the field of my soul, there is the spreading of hosts. Arise, on Clonar's troubled soul, young daughter of blue-shielded Clungal. ” —

“ Clungal was the chief of I-mor, one of the Hebrides.

Then rose the voice of Fingal, and the sound of the flying foe. I saw the king, at times, in lightning, darkly-striding in his might. I struck my echoing shield, and hung forward on the steps of Alnecma: the foe is rolled before me, like a wreath of smোক.

The sun looked forth from his cloud. The hundred streams of Moi-lena shone. Slow rose the blue columns of mist, against the glittering hill. — Where are the mighty kings? (1) — Nor by that stream, nor wood, are they! — I hear the clang of arms! — Their strife is in the bosom of mist. — Such is the contending of spirits in a nightly cloud,

(1) Fingal and Cathmor. The conduct of the poet, in this passage, is remarkable. His numerous descriptions of single combats had already exhausted the subject. Nothing new, nor adequate to our high idea of the kings could be said, Ossian, therefore, throws a *column of mist* over the whole, and leaves the combat to the imagination of the reader. — Poets have almost universally failed in their descriptions of this sort. Not all the strength of Homer could sustain, with dignity, the *minutiae* of a single combat. The throwing of a spear, and the braying of a shield, as some of our own poets most elegantly express it, convey no grand ideas. Our imagination stretches beyond, and, consequently, despises, the description. It were, therefore, well, for some poets, in my opinion, (tho' it is, perhaps, somewhat singular) to have, sometimes, like Ossian, thrown *mist* over their single combats.

When

BOOK VIII. AN EPIC POEM. 213

when they strive for the wintry wings of winds, and the rolling of the foam-covered waves.

I rushed along. The grey mist rose. — Tall, gleaming, they stood at Lubar. — Cathmor leaned against a rock. His half-fallen shield received the stream, that leapt from the moss above. — Towards him is the stride of Fingal; he saw the hero's blood. His sword fell slowly to his side. — He spoke, midst his darkening joy.

Yields the race of Borbar-duthul? Or still does he lift the spear? Not unheard is thy name, in Selma, in the green dwelling of strangers. It has come, like the breeze of his desert, to the ear of Fingal. — Come to my hill of feasts: the mighty fail, at times. No fire am I to low-laid foes: I rejoice not over the fall of the brave. — To close (1) the wound is mine: I have known the herbs of the hills.

(1) Fingal is very much celebrated, in tradition, for his knowledge in the virtues of herbs. The Irish poems, concerning him, often represent him, curing the wounds which his chiefs received in battle. They fable concerning him, that he was in possession of a cup, containing the essence of herbs, which instantaneously healed wounds. The knowledge of curing the wounded, was, till of late, universal among the Highlanders. We hear of no other disorder, which required the skill of physick. The wholesomeness of the climate, and an active life, spent in hunting, excluded diseases.

I seized their fair heads, on high, as they waved by their secret streams. — Thou art dark and silent, king of Atha of strangers.

By Atha of the streams, he said, there rises a mossy rock. On its head is the wandering of boughs, within the course of winds. Dark, in its face, is a cave with its own loud rill. — There have I heard the tread of strangers⁽¹⁾, when they passed to my hall of shells. Joy rose, like a flame, on my soul: I blest the echoing rock. Here be my dwelling, in darkness, in my grassy vale. From this I shall mount the breeze, that pursues my thistle's beard; or look down, on blue-winding Atha, from its wandering mist.

Why speaks the king of the tomb? —

(1) The hospitable disposition of Cathmor was unparalleled. He reflects, with pleasure, even in his last moments, on the relief he had afforded to strangers. The very tread of their feet was pleasant in his ear. — His hospitality was not passed unnoticed by succeeding bards; for, with them, it became a proverb, when they described the hospitable disposition of a hero, *that he was like Cathmor of Atha, the friend of strangers*. It will seem strange, that, in all the Irish traditions, there is no mention made of Cathmor. This must be attributed to the revolutions and domestic confusions which happened in that island, and utterly cut off all the real traditions concerning so ancient a period. All that we have related of the state of Ireland before the fifth century is of late invention, and the work of ill informed senachies and injudicious bards.

BOOK VIII. AN EPIC POEM. 215

Ossian ! the warrior has failed ! — Joy meet thy soul , like a stream , Cathmor , friend of strangers ! — My son , I hear the call of years ; they take my spear as they pass along . Why does not Fingal , they seem to say , rest within his hall ? Dost thou always delight in blood ? In the tears of the sad ? — No : ye darkly-rolling years , Fingal delights not in blood . Tears are wintry streams that waste away my soul . But , when I lie down to rest , then comes the mighty voice of war . It awakes me , in my hall , and calls forth all my steel . — It shall call it forth no more ; Ossian , take thou thy father's spear . Lift it , in battle , when the proud arise .

My fathers , Ossian , trace my steps ; my deeds are pleasant to their eyes . Wherever I come forth to battle , on my field , are their columns of mist . — But mine arm rescued the feeble ; the haughty found my rage was fire . Never over the fallen did mine eye rejoice . For this (1) my fathers shall meet me , at the

(1) We see , from this passage , that , even in the times of Ossian , and , consequently , before the introduction of christianity , they had some idea of rewards and punishments after death . — Those who behaved , in life , with bravery and virtue , were received , with joy , to the airy halls of their fathers : but *the dark in soul* , to use the expression of the poet , were spurned away from the habitation of heroes , to wander on all the winds . Another opinion , which

gates of their airy halls, tall, with robes of light, with mildly-kindled eyes. But, to the proud in arms, they are darkened moons in heaven, which send the fire of night, red-wandering over their face.

Father of heroes, Trenmor, dweller of eddying winds ! I give thy spear to Ossian, let thine eye rejoice. Thee have I seen, at times, bright from between thy clouds; so appear to my son, when he is to lift the spear : then shall he remember thy mighty deeds, though thou art now but a blast.

He gave the spear to my hand, and raised, at once, a stone on high, to speak to future times, with its grey head of moss. Beneath he placed a sword⁽¹⁾ in earth, and one bright bos

prevailed in those times, tended not a little to make individuals emulous to excel one another in martial achievements. It was thought, that, in the *hall of clouds*, every one had a seat, raised above others, in proportion as he excelled them, in valour, when he lived. — The simile in this paragraph is new, and, if I may use the expression of a bard, who alludes to it, *beautifully terrible*.

Mar dhubh-reül, an croma nan speur,
A thaomas teina na-h'oïcha,
Dearg-fruthach, air h'aighai' fein.

(1) There are some stones still to be seen in the north, which were erected, as memorials of some remarkable transactions between the ancient chiefs. There are generally found, beneath them, some

BOOK VIII. AN EPIC POEM. 217

from his shield. Dark in thought, a-while,
he bends : his words, at length, came forth.

When thou, O stone, shall moulder down,
and lose thee, in the moss of years, then shall
the traveller come, and whistling pass away.—
Thou know'st not, feeble wanderer, that fame
once shone on *Moi-lena*. Here *Fingal* resigned
his spear, after the last of his fields.—Pass
away, thou empty shade ; in thy voice there
is no renown. Thou dwellest by some peaceful
stream ; yet a few years, and thou art gone.
No one remembers thee, thou dweller of
thick mist ! — But *Fingal* shall be clothed with
fame, a beam of light to other times ; for he
went forth, in echoing steel, to save the
weak in arms.

Brightening in his fame, the king strode
to *Lubar's* sounding oak, where it bent, from
its rock, over the bright tumbling stream. Be-
neath it is a narrow plain, and the fount of the
fount of the rock. — Here the standard (1) of

piece of arms, and a bit of half-burnt wood. The
cause of placing the last there is not mentioned in
tradition.

(1) The erecting of his standard on the bank of
Lubar, was the signal, which *Fingal*, in the begin-
ning of the book, promised to give to the chiefs,
who went to conduct *Ferad-artho* to the army, should
he himself prevail in battle. This standard here (and
in every other part of *Ossian's* poems, where it is

Morven poured its wreaths on the wind, to mark the way of Ferad-artho, from his secret vale. — Bright, from his parted west, the sun of heaven looked abroad. The hero saw his people, and heard their shouts of joy. In broken ridges round, they glittered to the beam. The king rejoiced, as a hunter in his own green vale, when, after the storm is rolled away, he sees the gleaming sides of the rocks. The green thorn shakes its head in their face; from their top, look forward the roes.

(1) Grey, at his mossy cave, is bent the aged form of Clonmal. The eyes of the bard had failed. He leaned forward, on his staff. Bright in her locks, before him, Sul-malla listened to the tale; the tale of the kings of Atha, in the days of old. The noise of battle had ceased in his ear: he stopt, and raised the secret sigh. The spirits of the dead, they said, often lightened over his soul. He saw the king of Atha low, beneath his bending tree.

mentioned) is called, the *sun-beam*. The reason of this appellation, I gave, more than once, in my notes in the preceding volume.

(1) The poet changes the scene to the valley of Lona, whither Sul-malla had been sent, by Cathmor, before the battle. Clonmal, an aged bard, or rather druid, as he seems here to be endued with a prescience of events, had long dwelt there, in a cave. This scene is awful and solemn, and calculated to throw a melancholy gloom over the mind.

Why art thou dark, said the maid ? The strife of arms is past. Soon⁽¹⁾ shall he come to thy cave, over thy winding streams. The sun looks from the rocks of the west. The mists of the lake arise. Grey, they spread on that hill, the rushy dwelling of roes. From the mist shall my king appear ! Behold, he comes in his arms. Come to the cave of Clonmal, O my best beloved !

It was the spirit of Cathmor, stalking, large, a gleaming form. He sunk by the hollow stream, that roared between the hills. — « It was but the hunter, she said, who searches for the bed of the roe. His steps are not forth to war ; his spouse expects him with night. — He shall, whistling, return, with spoils of the dark-brown hinds. » — Her eyes are turned to the hill ; again the stately form came down. She rose, in the midst of joy. He retired in mist. Gradual vanish his limbs of smok, and mix with the mountain-wind. — Then she knew that he fell ! « King of Erin art thou low ! » — Let Ossian forget her grief ; it wastes the soul of age ⁽²⁾.

(1) Cathmor had promised, in the seventh book, to come to the cave of Clonmal, after the battle was over.

(2) The abrupt manner, in which Ossian quits the story of Sul-malla, is judicious. His subject led him immediately to relate the restoration of

Evening came down on Moi-lena. Grey rolled the streams of the land. Loud came forth the voice of Fingal: the beam of oaks

the family of Conar, to the Irish throne; which we may consider effectually done, by the defeat and death of Cathmor, and the arrival of Ferad-artio in the Caledonian army. To pursue, here, the story of the *maid of Inis-huna*, which was foreign to the subject, would be altogether inconsistent with the rapid manner of Ossian, and a breach on unity of time and action, one of the fundamental essentials of the *epopæa*; the rules of which our Celtic bard gathered from nature, not from the precepts of critics. — Neither did the poet totally desert the beautiful Sul-malla, deprived of her lover, and a stranger, as she was, in a foreign land. Tradition relates, that Ossian, the next day after the decisive battle between Fingal and Cathmor, went to find out Sul-malla, in the valley of Lona. His address to her, which is still preserved, I here lay before the reader.

“Awake, thou daughter of Conmor, from the fern-skirted cavern of Lona. Awake, thou sun-beam in deserts; warriors one day must fail. They move forth, like terrible lights; but, often, their cloud is near. — Go to the valley of streams, to the wandering of herds, on Lumon; there dwells, in his lazy mist, the man of many days. But he is unknown, Sul-malla, like the thistle of the rocks of roes; it shakes its grey beard, in the wind, and falls, unseen of our eyes. — Not such are the kings of men, their departure is a meteor of fire, which pours its red course, from the desert, over the bosom of night.

“He is mixed with the warriors of old, those

BOOK VIII. AN EPIC POEM. 221

arose. The people gathered round with gladness; with gladness blended with shades. They sidelong looked to the king, and beheld his unfinished joy. — Pleasant, from the way of the desert, the voice of music came. It seemed, at first, the noise of a stream, far-distant on its rocks. Slow it rolled along the hill like the ruffled wing of a breeze, when it takes the tufted beard of the rocks, in the still season of night. — It was the voice of Condan, mixed with Carril's trembling harp. They came with blue-eyed Ferad-artho, to Mora of the streams.

Sudden bursts the song from our bards, on Lena: the host struck their shields midst the sound. Gladness rose brightening on the king, like the beam of a cloudy day when it rises, on the green hill, before the roar of

fires that have hid their heads. At times shall they come forth in song. Not forgot has the warrior failed. — He has not seen, Sul-malla, the fall of a beam of his own: no fair-haired son, in his blood, young troubler of the field. — I am lonely, young branch of Lumon, I may hear the voice of the feeble, when my strength shall have failed in years, for young Oscar has ceased, on his field. — * * *

The rest of the poem is lost; from the story of it, which is still preserved, we understand, that Sul-malla returned to her own country. Sul-malla makes a considerable figure in the poem which immediately follows in the ensuing volume; her behaviour in that piece accounts for that partial regard with which the poet speaks of her throughout Temora.

222 TEMORA: BOOK VIII.

winds. — He struck the bossy shield of kings; at once they cease around. The people lean forward, from their spears, towards the voice of their land (1).

Sons of Morven, spread the feast; send the night away on song. Ye have shone around me, and the dark storm is past. My people are the windy rocks, from which I spread my eagle wings, when I rush forth to renown, and seize it on its field. — Ossian, thou hast the spear of Fingal: it is not the staff of a

(1) Before I finish my notes, it may not be altogether improper to obviate an objection, which may be made to the credibility of the story of Temora, as related by Ossian. It may be asked, whether it is probable, that Fingal could perform such actions as are ascribed to him in this book, at an age when his grandson, Oscar had acquired so much reputation in arms. To this it may be answered, that Fingal was but very young [book 4th] when he took to wife Ros-crana, who soon after became the mother of Ossian. Ossian was also extremely young when he married Ever-allin, the mother of Oscar. Tradition relates, that Fingal was but eighteen years old at the birth of his son Ossian; and that Ossian was much about the same age, when Oscar, his son, was born. Oscar, perhaps, might be about twenty, when he was killed, in the battle of Gabhra; [book 1st] so the age of Fingal when the decisive battle was fought between him and Cathmor, was just fifty-six years. In those times of activity and health, the natural strength and vigour of a man was little abated, at such an age; so that there is nothing improbable in the actions of Fingal, as related in this book.

BOOK VIII. AN EPIC POEM. 223

boy with which he strews the thistle round,
young wanderer of the field. — No : it is
the lance of the mighty ; with which they
stretched forth their hands to death. Look to
thy fathers, my son ; they are awful beams.
— With morning lead Ferad-artho forth to
the echoing halls of Temora. Remind him
of the kings of Erin ; the stately forms of
old. — Let not the fallen be forgot, they were
mighty in the field. Let Carril pour his song,
that the kings may rejoice in their mist. —
To-morrow I spread my sails to Selma's shaded
walls ; where streamy Duthula winds through
the seats of roes. —

END of TEMORA.

CONTENTS.

A Dissertation.	Page III
TEMORA, an Epic Poem, Book I. Pag. 1	
Book II.	35
Book III.	63
Book IV.	91
Book V.	115
Book VI.	139
Book VII.	167
Book VIII.	193

ERRATA.

Page 6, line 1, streams, read streams. —
P. 26, l. 27, relared, r. related. — P. 72,
l. 26, is, r. it. — P. 89, l. 30, ligh, r.
light. — P. 113, l. 34, aud, r. and. — P.
134, l. 30, of, r. of. — P. 148, l. 22, his,
r. is. — P. 149, l. 28, voice, r. voice. —
P. 181, l. 37, belongs, r. belong. — P. 206,
l. 24. dak; r. dark. — P. 210, l. 2, rol ed,
r. rolled.

